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SC REGISTRY REJECTS GOVT'S REQUEST TO CLARIFY 2G VERDICT

The Centre sought to know whether or not the 2012 judgment bars the allocation of spectrum through means other than public auction

NON-AUCTION ROUTE FOR SPECTRUM ALLOCATION

In the 2012 verdict, the Supreme Court observed that public auction should be the preferred method for allocation of public resources like spectrum. The Centre, in its application, sought an exemption from the auction route for the allocation of spectrum for certain non-commercial purposes that allow the government to carry out its sovereign and public interest functions

REGISTRAR SAYS APPLICATION MISCONCEIVED

- The registry said the Centre's application was in effect seeking a review of the 2012 verdict in the guise of seeking clarification
- The registrar termed the application as "misconceived" and said it "does not disclose any reasonable cause for being entertained". The Centre can now appeal to the court against the registrar's order

Order XV, rule 5

OF SUPREME COURT RULES, 2013 ALLOWS THE REGISTRAR TO REJECT APPLICATIONS

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

SEX SCANDAL

CM to PM: Take diplomatic action to bring Prajwal back

Soon after the scandal came to light, students, activists and civil society groups protested across the state seeking the arrest of JDS MP Prajwal Revanna

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to initiate action through the Ministry of External Affairs to bring JDS MP Prajwal Revanna, accused in the Hassan sex scandal, back to the country.

In a letter to the PM, the CM sought immediate steps to cancel the diplomatic passport of Prajwal and initiate action through diplomatic and police channels to ensure the swift return of the MP to "face the full force of law." The Special Investigation Team (SIT) of Karnataka will provide all details and fulfil legal formalities in this regard, the CM stated.

Siddaramaiah said the alleged sexual exploitation of women by the sitting Hassan MP and NDA candidate for Hassan LS seat is a serious case. The allegations against Prajwal are horrific and shameful and have shaken the conscience of the country, he added.

Siddaramaiah said SIT under the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) is probing all allegations against Prajwal. "Constitution of SIT was done as soon as the true nature of the alleged crimes against several women emerged and the victims came forward to file a complaint against Prajwal Revanna, and an FIR was lodged on Sunday," he stated.

The CM said Prajwal fled the country fearing police action. "It is learnt from reports that he is traveling abroad on his diplomatic passport," the CM added. MORE: P4

MP Prajwal seeks a week to appear before SIT

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru/Hassan

HASSAN MP Prajwal Revanna on Wednesday requested the SIT to give him seven days to appear before it.

The SIT issued a notice on Tuesday asking him to appear before it within 24 hours. In his first reaction after the scandal came to light, the JDS MP posted on his social media accounts, "Truth will prevail soon." Prajwal, who is abroad, posted, "As I am not in Bangalore to attend the enquiry, I have communicated to CID through my advocate. Truth will prevail soon."

Advocate Arun G, representing the MP, visited the CID office and submitted a request to the investigation officer (IO) of SIT seeking seven days for his client to appear before him for questioning.

Even as the SIT is probing the case registered by Holenarasipura police against Prajwal Revanna and his father HD Revanna, MLA, they are likely to move the jurisdictional court on Thursday. It is learnt that they will file their anticipatory bail petition before the court. They may also move the High Court of Karnataka to quash the FIR against them. Revanna, who has been summoned by the SIT, may not appear before it as directed.

Shah: State govt's delay helped Prajwal flee

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday targeted the Congress government in Karnataka for not taking immediate action in the Hassan sex scandal and said, as a result, the accused in heinous crimes fled the country. Addressing a rally in Hubballi, he alleged that the Congress government did not act against Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna for the fear of losing Vokkaliga votes. He said the state government waited for voting in the Vokkaliga belt to get over to act against the MP. He, however, reiterated that the BJP would never stand with anybody who sexually exploits or harasses any woman.

No Saptapati? No Hindu marriage: SC

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY
@ New Delhi

IN a significant verdict on the Hindu Marriage Act (HMA), the Supreme Court has ruled that the registration of a union will be null and void if a valid ceremony and rituals like the *Saptapati*, are not performed.

A bench of justices B V Nagarathna and Augustine George Masih described the Hindu marriage as a *samskara* and a sacrament which has to be accorded its status as an institution of great value in the society.

"A marriage is not an event for 'song and dance' and 'wining and dining' or an occasion to demand and exchange dowry and gifts by undue pressure leading to possible initiation of criminal proceedings thereafter. A marriage is not a commercial transaction. It is a solemn foundational event celebrated so as to establish a relationship between a man and a woman who acquire the status of a husband and wife for an evolving family in future which is a basic unit of Indian society," the bench said.

The court made these observations after hearing a petition filed by a woman seeking transfer of her divorce case from Muzaffarpur in Bihar to Ranchi in Jharkhand. The couple had registered their marriage in UP without the valid ceremonial wedding under the HMA.

The bench, after perusing

the marriage certificate in the case — both are trained commercial pilots — said that since it was issued in the absence of ceremonial requirements under Section 7 of HMA, it was invalid. It also quashed the divorce petition filed by the man and the maintenance case instituted by the woman.

The bench disapproved the increasing practice of couples getting their 'marriages' registered for "practical purposes" like applying for a visa and solemnising the union later.

Young men and women must "think deeply about the institution of marriage even before they enter upon it and as to how sacred the said institution is, in Indian society," the bench said. Describing marriage as sacred as it provides a lifelong, dignity-affirming, equal, consensual and healthy union of two individuals, the bench said a Hindu marriage facilitates procreation, consolidates the unit of family and solidifies the spirit of fraternity within various communities.

Record Rs 2.10 lakh crore GST collection in April

Maharashtra led the mop-up chart followed by Karnataka, Gujarat

MONIKA YADAV @ New Delhi

THE monthly gross GST collection crossed the ₹2 lakh crore milestone for the first time in April, giving the government bragging rights over the health of the economy.

The record jump came from a 12.4% rise as compared to April last year's figures of ₹1.87 lakh crore. The surge was mainly driven by a strong 13.4% growth in domestic transactions and an 8.3% increase in imports, the finance ministry said.

"After accounting for refunds, the net GST revenue for April 2024 stands at ₹1.92 lakh crore, reflecting an impressive 15.5% growth compared to the same period last year," the ministry's statement said.

When the GST system was rolled out in 2017-18, the monthly mop-up used to be in the range of ₹80,000-90,000 crore. It crossed ₹1 lakh crore mark for the first time in October 2018.

Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman attributed the record to "the strong momentum in the economy and efficient tax collections".

Pratik Jain, Partner, PwC India said: "As expected, the collections for April '24 have crossed a major milestone of 2 lakh crore. It is particularly encouraging to see that that growth is largely led by domestic consumption. With the next wave of GST reforms expected after the formation of the new Government, the growth may be further accelerated."

He added that it may also enable the government to take bolder decisions such as rate rationalisation or bringing products such as ATF and natural gas under the GST ambit.

Abhishek Jain, Partner & National Head, Indirect Tax, KPMG, attributed this surge to the deadline for GST audits and corresponding notices issued during this year.

Maharashtra led the GST mop-up chart followed by Karnataka and Gujarat.

K'TAKA NETS HIGHEST COLLECTION OF Rs 15,978 CR

Bengaluru: The election season seems to have not dampened GST collections. Karnataka recorded its highest GST collection of Rs 15,978 crore in April and bagged the second position. Sources in the tax department, who waged a running battle against tax evaders, said, "Because of the Model Code of Conduct, follow up and compliance has been good. Six people have been arrested for tax fraud and cases have been registered. The fight against tax evasion is on." Karnataka's growth remained at an impressive 9% compared to the collection of Rs 14,593 crore during the same month last year.

Docs remove cell phone from stomach of accused

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Shivamogga

DOCTORS found a mobile phone during a surgery performed on an undertrial lodged in Shivamogga Central Jail on April 25.

On March 28 Parashuram, 26, the undertrial, complained of stomach pain and he was taken to the hospital on the jail premises. When Parashuram complained that he could tolerate the pain, he was taken to the McGANN Teaching District Hospital the same night.

Parashuram told the doctors there that he had swallowed a stone sometime ago. Accordingly, the doctors reported "stomach pain due to consumption of a foreign body (stone)" and treated him.

As his condition deteriorated on April 1, the doctors advised the jail officials that Parashuram needed some specialised treatment. On April 6, he was shifted to the Victoria Hospital in Bengaluru, where a mobile phone was removed from Parashuram's stomach on April 25.

A case has been filed against Parashuram with the Tunganagar police in Shivamogga under Section 42 of The Karnataka Prisons (Amendment) Act - 2022 for possessing a mobile phone while in prison.

24 KILLED IN CHINA ROAD COLLAPSE

The cave-in occurred around 2am in Dabu County of Guangdong's northern Meizhou city. Nearly 18 metres of the mountainous highway crumbled into the forested slope below, trapping 20 vehicles and 54 passengers.

SEAL SYMBOL-LOADING UNITS AS PER APEX COURT ORDER: EC

MUKESH RANJAN @ New Delhi

THE Election Commission of India (ECI) on Wednesday asked all state chief electoral officers (CEOs) to seal and securely store the symbol loading units (SLUs), to be used in the remaining five phases of the Lok Sabha elections, till 45 days post the declaration of results.

The SLUs are devices used to load candidates' party symbols to the Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT).

The Supreme Court had in its verdict on electronic voting machines (EVMs) and

VVPATs last week, directed the ECI to seal and secure the SLUs for 45 days after the declaration of results. At present, only the EVMs and VVPATs are sealed and stored to allow for examination of the machines if candidates file election petitions.

But from now on, in compliance with the court's order, SLUs will also be examined, if there is an election petition.

As per sources, the new requirement could lead to a shortage of up to 3,000 SLUs for the last two phases.

Sources said to meet the shortfall, the Election Commission has asked the Bharat Electronics and the Electronics Corporation of India to manufacture more SLUs.

EXPRESS READ

Salman house firing: Accused kills self

Mumbai: A 32-year-old man, who was arrested in connection with firing incident outside actor Salman Khan's residence, allegedly hanged himself in the police lockup on Wednesday. The deceased, Anuj Thapan, was accused of supplying weapons to the shooters who opened fire outside Khan's residence in Bandra on April 14 | P9

Plea in SC seeks study of AstraZeneca vax

New Delhi: A plea has been filed by lawyer Vishal Tiwari in the Supreme Court seeking examination of AstraZeneca's Covishield vaccine, its side effects and risk factors by constituting a team of expert doctors from AIIMS. The panel should be headed by its director and supervised by a retired Justice of Supreme Court, the plea has sought | P9

ECI bars KCR from campaigning for 48 hours

New Delhi: The Election Commission on Wednesday reprimanded Bharat Rashtra Samithi president K Chandrashekar Rao and barred him from campaigning for 48 hours for his "objectionable" remarks against the Congress. The EC said his remarks at a press conference on April 5 violated the model code of conduct | P5

'Old tiger' roars as Congress seeks to remove the scent of Ajmal in Dhubri

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR
@ Guwahati

IT will be a battle for survival for Assam's most visible Muslim face nationally, Maulana Badruddin Ajmal, when Dhubri goes to parliamentary elections on May 7.

SHOWTIME FOR GLADIATORS

The 68-year-old, who is the three-time sitting MP and chief of All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF), is facing a challenge from Rakibul Hussain, a former Congress minister. Zabed Islam of the Asom Gana Parishad is the NDA's consensus candidate.

Dhubri is considered the heartland of Bengali-speaking migrant Muslims. It shares a border with Bangladesh. The outcome of the polls will decide not only the future of Ajmal but also his party.

Over the past few years, a section of AIUDF supporters migrated to other parties, disillusioned that he is allegedly running it as a business enterprise. Ajmal is a perfume baron with business interests in India and some Gulf countries.

The AIUDF also contested Nagaon and Karimganj, both Muslim-majority seats which went to polls on April 26. Critics say the party set up candidates in these seats primarily to aid the ruling BJP. The BJP and the Congress were the two main players in Nagaon and Karimganj.

The Congress is trying to send across a message that Ajmal is an "old tiger" and that the AIUDF is the "B Team" of the BJP. It is telling voters that they have to stop Ajmal first if they want to evict the BJP from power in the state.

ILLUSTRATION: MANDAR PARDIKAR

But Ajmal has many advantages. He is rich and known widely as a philanthropist. A virtual messiah of the migrant Muslims, he has been at the forefront every time the community faced any hardships, including during the time when the 1951 National Register of Citizens or NRC was updated in the state.

He had comfortably won the past three elections in the absence of strong opponents. But Hussain is expected to give the AIUDF chief a run for his money this time around.

For Hussain, who holds sway in parts of central Assam, it is his maiden parliamentary election. Since decades, the Congress had been influential in Dhubri and the adjoining Goalpara and Barpeta districts. Then, it slowly lost the space to the AIUDF. If Hussain wins, it could well be the first step for the Congress towards regaining the lost ground.

"Badruddin Ajmal is an old tiger. He woos people through magical healing but it will not keep him in a good stead this election," Hussain claimed.

But Ajmal dismissed the old tiger barb by saying that a tiger is a tiger, whether young or old. "I am young enough to marry again," he said. He predicted that Hussain's defeat is "100% certain". "Nobody can defeat Ajmal in Dhubri. I will win by 5 to 6 lakh votes," he said confidently.

MONSOON-READY

Massive cleaning works at Challaghatta Valley SWDs

BBMP clears tonnes of silt to ensure unobstructed flow of rainwater

A storm water drain connecting Challaghatta Valley cleared of silt | EXPRESS

MOHAMMED YACOOB @Bengaluru

AHEAD of the monsoon, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has taken up massive cleaning works of storm water drains connecting Challaghatta Valley that flows from East to Southeast Bengaluru.

According to principal engineer and incharge of the Storm Water Drain (SWD) department in BBMP, BS Prahallad, Chief Commissioner Tushar Girinath had issued directions to clean up all drains ahead of the monsoon, and SWD engineers were given standing instructions to ensure free flow of storm water. From Assaye Road SWD alone, BBMP cleared 1,000 tonnes of muck to ensure free flow of water during rain.

"Like the K-100 Project, to ensure free flow of water without any sewage leak into Koramangala Valley, BBMP has taken up the Challaghatta Valley project. Our officials coordinated with Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) to ensure there is no sewage leak from their pipes that run along the stormwater drain. Once BWSSB fixed their pipes, our engineers brought in men and machinery and cleared 1,000 tonnes of silt," said Prahallad.

He said that due to the massive cleaning drive and fixing of BWSSB pipes on Assaye Road stormwater drains, there will be no sewage flow into Ulsoor Lake in future. The department is also cleaning major drains in areas like Domlur and Jeevan Bimanagar as water from drains flows to Challaghatta Valley downstream.

Officials said they were also contemplating taking up a massive clean-up of SWDs connecting Vrushabhavathi Valley, as it is more polluted compared to other valleys. However, they started work on Challaghatta Valley as there were orders to take up work on this project on priority basis.

Lauding the BBMP's act, Khaiser Ahmed, president of Fraser Town Residents' Welfare Association, said that due to muck and choking of the Assaye Road storm water drain, roads near Ulsoor, Sundar Murthy Road, Promenade Road and Sindhi Colony Road would flood during the monsoon. "Every time there is moderate to heavy rain, these areas would flood and it took at least two hours for the water to recede after the rain stopped," said Ahmed.

> Due to the massive cleaning drive and fixing of BWSSB pipes on Assaye Road stormwater drains, there will be no sewage flow into Ulsoor Lake in future
>
> — BS Prahallad, principal engineer and incharge of SWD department, BBMP

Open drain, sewage plague these residents

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

RESIDENTS of Vs Sunshine, a 24-flat apartment complex on Haralur Road opposite Vivero International School have raised concerns over an open drain that collects stagnant water from surrounding areas right in front of their homes.

They opined that because of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) exemption that apartment buildings with less than 120 units need not instal Sewage Treatment Plants (SPTs), untreated sewage from nearby buildings is released into the drain and it accumulates in front of their apartment. The problem will likely worsen during the rainy season, they said.

"Over the past few years, we have observed that this open drain is not only becoming a significant environmental hazard but is also posing serious health risks to the people staying here. We have made several attempts to alert officials, but they have not been fruitful. Last year, we also complained to the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board, stating that nearby residents are exposed to unhealthy and unsanitary conditions, leading to increased cases of skin rashes, gastrointestinal issues, etc," they said.

The response has been inadequate. BWSSB officials inspected the area and said they do not clean drains as it is the responsibility of BBMP. But BBMP officials are evading the issue, saying the ward does not fall under their jurisdiction.

Bengaluru Navanirmana Party has said civic agencies are shrugging off their responsibility and demanded a proactive local governance.

Set up dist anti-ragging panels: UGC to states

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

THE University Grants Commission (UGC) redirected all Higher Educational Institutes (HEIs) to constitute anti-ragging committees in their colleges and universities if they have failed to do so far. In case of extreme ragging and suicide cases the principal of the college and registrar of the university will be called and will be answerable to the National Anti-Ragging Monitoring Committee for non-compliance of UGC regulations on the issues, reiterated the letter dated April 18.

Taking cognisance of the increasing stress levels among students and many taking extreme steps, the commission also issued another notification to form a district-level anti-ragging committee. The letter is addressed to the chief secretary of all states.

"District Collector/ Deputy Commissioner/ District Magistrate must be the head of the committee. The heads of the university or college, the superintendent of police or the SSP of the district must be members. The additional district magistrate will be the member secretary. The committee must have representatives of the local media, district-level NGO, student organisations, local police, local administration and the institutional authorities to ensure vigil on incidents that may come within the definition of ragging," stated the letter.

The district-level committee must also hold preparatory meetings during the summer vacation to take stock of the preparedness of each institution and their compliance with the anti-ragging regulations and plan for awareness campaigns for the new academic year in English, Hindi and local languages.

UGC noted that examinations such as NEET, JEE and other competitive tests cause increased stress among students. There is no stress management mechanism available to cope with this. "A team of good counsellors with expertise in yoga, meditation and psychology who can read stressful minds to tackle such problematic cases need to be available. Therefore, a full-time counsellor, Yoga, or Meditation instructor may be appointed," read the directive.

EXPRESS ILLUSTRATION

According to a recently released report, the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) revealed that Bengaluru Urban district has the highest density of colleges in the country (1,106) and the state has a total of 4,430 colleges, securing the third position after Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, implementing anti-ragging regulations is utmost necessary. However many college and university websites lacked phone numbers of nodal officers with limited information on anti-ragging. On some the helpline number too was incomplete.

Students in distress due to ragging can call the National anti-ragging helpline number 1800-180-5522

NO SIGN OF RELIEF

A group of women covers themselves from the afternoon sun as the city continues to register high temperatures | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

Deadline for aerator installation now May 7

Bengaluru: To encourage efficient use of water, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has extended the deadline to fix aerators/flow restrictors in taps to May 7, and will start imposing a penalty from May 8. Earlier, the BWSSB made it compulsory to install aerator/flow restrictors in faucets in malls, commercial complexes, apartments, government buildings, luxury hotels, restaurants, public areas and religious places. The last date to install the aerators was April 30. "More than 6 lakh aerators have already been installed in many places across the city," said BWSSB Chairman Ram Prasath Manohar and added that officials will conduct an inspection and impose fines on those who do not adopt aerators. ENS

Student tries to open emergency door on plane

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

A 22-year-old engineering student has been booked by Bengaluru airport police for attempting to open the emergency door of an IndiGo flight from Kolkata to Bengaluru mid-air on Monday night. Following an FIR booked by Indigo, Koushik Karan, a native of Bankura in West Bengal, was arrested on Wednesday (May 1) and later released on station bail.

The flight (No 6E-6314) had taken off on April 29 from Kolkata at 8.15 pm and was scheduled to reach Terminal 1 of Kempegowda International Airport by 10.30 pm. "Karan was assigned seat no 18E, but he opted to occupy seat no 18F where the emergency exit door is positioned. He removed the flap cover on the handle from the starboard side (right side) of the emergency door when the aircraft was nearing Bengaluru airport," said a CISF source. The crew prevented Karan from opening the door.

The source added, "The pilot declared him unruly and handed him over to IndiGo security staff and the CISF on arrival at Bengaluru. The airlines staff handed him over to KIA police on Tuesday (April 30) at 12.33 am."

An IndiGo staffer, Mohammed Umar, filed a complaint with KIA on Tuesday. Police have booked an FIR under section 336 of IPC 1860 that deals with rash or negligent acts that endanger life or the personal safety of others.

Hospitals, PHCs in Bengaluru, Kalaburagi not disabled-friendly: Study

RISHITA KHANNA @ Bengaluru

HEALTHCARE centres in Bengaluru and Kalaburagi exhibit significant shortcomings in catering to the needs of Persons with Disabilities (PwD).

The findings of a study conducted by the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP), in New Delhi, revealed the absence of disability-friendly toilets in hospitals, lack of essential accessibility features such as ramps, railings and assistive aids at Primary Health Centres (PHCs).

Further, the study highlighted that adults with intellectual disabilities encounter difficulties in authenticating Aadhaar due to their inability to cooperate and provide thumb impressions.

Participants highlighted several key barriers to accessing healthcare services in Bengaluru, including accessibility issues such as inadequate infrastructure and facilities tailored to the needs of individuals with disabilities, including the absence of disabled-friendly toilets, insufficient ramps, and a shortage of wheelchairs.

The study reflected on attitudinal barriers, with personnel often neglecting individuals with disabilities, highlighting the need for sensitization and training. Information and communication challenges also were raised by participants due to limited signage in accessible formats, hindering navigation for those with visual impairments.

Participants also highlighted that they encounter significant challenges related to transportation as high costs pose a major obstacle, with many participants stating the expense of transportation services as a "significant burden". Moreover, accessibility and disability-friendly options are lacking, as reported by multiple participants. The available transportation choices often fail to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities, indicating a pressing need for more accommodating and inclusive transportation solutions in the city.

The study also reflected on affordability concerns due to the high costs associated with medical treatment, medication and assistive devices, placing significant financial strain on individuals and their families.

As per the findings, addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that involves implementing targeted policies, investing in infrastructural improvements and engaging in inclusive healthcare planning.

Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL

02nd May: More about the Moon. You probably know that it presents a monthly energy-peak but you may not have been aware that some research indicates that women have more energy at the Full Moon, but men are most active at the New Moon. I'm looking forward for more confirmation of this. It really does indicate that men and women are different!

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr. 20)
Mercury, the planet of communication, has now picked itself up and dusted itself down after recent bruising encounters. Seldom have you been so determined to get your point across, and rarely have you been the proud possessor of such persuasive powers.

TAURUS (Apr. 21 - May 21)
You can be as self-interested as the next person, yet there's something noble and idealistic about your wisdom and genuine friendship. We will all gain if you continue to act with such generosity of spirit, even in ways which may not be clear for a very long time.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
Your lot in life, at the moment, may be rather dull and many Geminians are quite frankly bored. You could do worse than rouse yourself and arrange an adventure, even if only a weekend break, to get away from your routine. There's nothing wrong with being an escapist!

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
Although, in astrological tradition, adverse and challenging aspects denote times of strife, discord and confusion, you must see such perils as the grit which eventually produces the pearl of great wisdom and success. In other words, you'll rise to the challenge.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23)
There is no escaping the fact that tension is mounting, as it always does before the Moon aligns with your sign. You can do no better than consciously maintain an optimistic and tolerant spirit in the face of whatever doubts or irritations afflict your daily life.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)
Suspicions about other people's actions may be countered by sadness over a recent event. Whatever your personal situation, you are approaching a short period when the answers will only be found by looking within. You'll soon discover the part you played in creating current conditions.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)
Nostalgia seems to be an important ingredient at the present time. Many of you will gain from a sentimental trip to the past, not necessarily this week, but hopefully within a month. What you really have to do is recover old feelings and relive glorious memories.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
Even those lucky Scorpios who are gentlemen or ladies of leisure will be caught up in the general rush to achieve a deeply-held worldly desire. This is no time for regrets or uncertainty, and you should try not to be distracted by irrelevant memories.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22)
Today's stars really are excellent in that they encourage certain key Sagittarian aspirations, notably the instinctive desire for travel and adventure. Be warned, though, that entrenched positions and dogmatic battles are looming, and that you'd better be ready to change your mind.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20)
There is everything to gain from taking a calculated financial risk, just as long as you take full responsibility. Even if you incur a small loss, you will have clarified your priorities and personal needs. After all, sometimes you have to learn from your mistakes.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
Even peaceable Aquarians are sure to be involved in some sort of fracas over the next week. There may be no other advice than to raise the drawbridge and prepare a defensive position. But, while you're about it, there are other important actions you can take, like acquiring new practical skills.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar 20)
Now is a perfect time to pay attention to your physical needs and well-being. Make a fresh start as far as diet and exercise are concerned and remember that the astrological approach to health has more to do with prevention than cure - and with maintaining a sensible balance in your emotions.

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

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		3		7		6	5	

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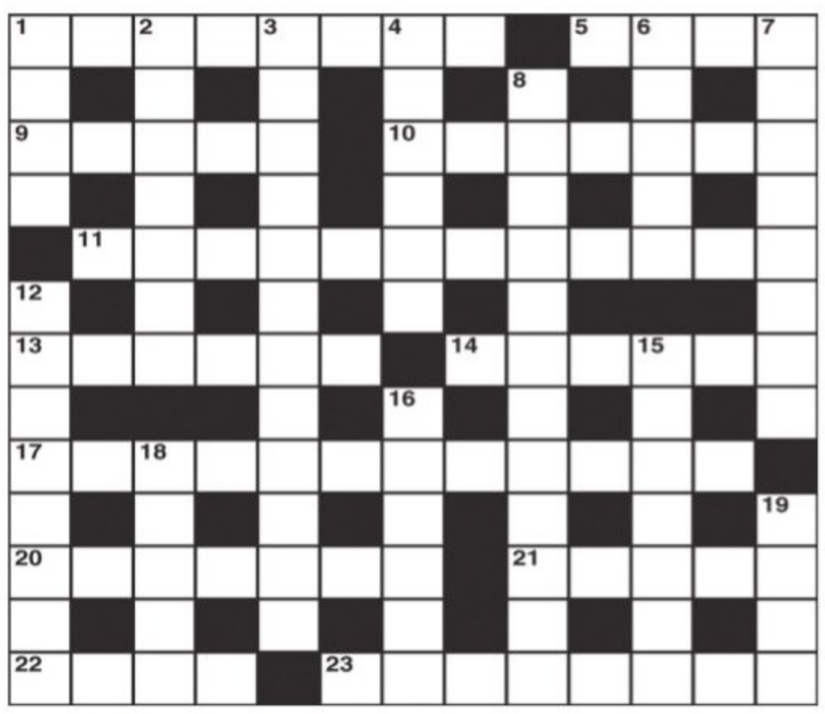
4	2	7	6	3	9	1	8	5
9	1	5	8	4	2	3	7	6
6	5	9	4	1	3	7	2	8
1	7	4	9	2	8	5	6	3
2	8	3	7	6	5	9	1	4
7	4	2	5	9	6	8	3	1
8	9	1	3	7	4	6	5	2
5	3	6	2	8	1	4	9	7

SUDOKU MEDIUM

TEST YOUR NUMBER CRUNCHING SKILL WITH OUR UNIQUE PUZZLE

Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3 X3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



CROSS WORD

ACROSS
1 Left with a suggestion of evil (8)
5 I depart right after the Prince (4)
9 It won't stop you reading for long (5)
10 The smell of wine and flowers (7)
11 Two things needed for fiddle at the card table (6,6)
13 One won't say no to this (6)
14 Reel composed of endless curtseying (6)
17 Undecided fate of plane dropping paratroops (4,2,3,3)
20 Hide the real changes (7)
21 He has a short way to pull (5)
22 Dig into a drawer for cash (4)
23 If you lose them, then you're lost as well (8)

DOWN
1 Dismissal welcomed by Falstaff? (4)
2 Disturbed mice run in numbers (7)
3 Result of refusing to take things lying down? (5-2,5)
4 In a gem blemishes affect the standard (6)
6 Sort of guy to have overindulged habitually? (5)
7 Shy about going to bed? (8)
8 Work in harmony as rowers should (4,8)
12 Happen to be on the level but gain no applause (4,4)
15 The country bears it in mind (7)
16 Make fast? (6)
18 Easily shattered by loud abuse (5)
19 Leonard's small telescope will have one (4)

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Serve time, 8 Learn, 9 Musical, 10 Fiscal, 11 Levers, 12 Emphasis, 15 Impostor, 18 Choose, 20 Lariat, 21 Mallard, 22 Trave, 23 Sovereign.

Down: 2 Etude, 3 Veiled, 4 Transept, 5 Elfish, 6 Fascist, 7 Enclosure, 11 Legislate, 13 Purchase, 14 Spartan, 16 Spades, 17 Goalie, 19 Shrug.

JUMBLE UNSCRAMBLE THESE JUMBLES, ONE LETTER TO EACH SQUARE, TO FORM FOUR ORDINARY WORDS.

BY DAVID L. HOYT AND JEFF KNUREK

SEYMS

EDNUU

ROIDNO

NBOTEN

LIVE
Look at this crowd waiting on the new Jumble book!
You're going to need to finish chewing before we cut back. It's pretty loud.
You can hear me?
Studio 1
THE NEWS ANCHOR'S MIC RECORDED HER EATING WHICH RESULTED IN ---
Get the free JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: _____ _____

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: WALTZ SWOON THRIVE GASKET
Answer: The identical twins started a new business and were ready to — GET "TWO" WORK

The Bharthinagar police arrested two individuals involved in the theft of a truck worth Rs 12 lakh and successfully recovered the stolen vehicle. The accused have been identified as Raju (24), a resident of Sanjay Gandhi Nagar, and Ranjith Kumar (20), a resident of Bahubali Nagar, Jalahalli, both of whom are professional drivers

BITCOIN CASE

High Court denies anticipatory bail to inspector, DySP

Accused being top officers have higher chances of destroying evidence, says court

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

THE Karnataka High Court refused to grant anticipatory bail to police inspector Chandradhara SR and Deputy Superintendent of Police Shridhar K Pujar, a proclaimed offender, in connection with the crime registered in relation to the Bitcoin scam.

They are accused No. 3 and 5 respectively in the crime registered by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) under provisions of the IPC and Information Technology Act, 2000. They approached the high court for anticipatory bail as their petitions were rejected by the sessions court.

"The petitioners being the police officers holding high positions, there are higher chances of manipulating the records as well as destruction of evidence, as there is already an allegation of attempt of destruction of the evidence. Hence, looking into the facts and circumstances, both the petitions being devoid of any merits do not survive for consideration and need to be rejected," said Justice Rajendra Badamikar.

Special Public Prosecutor BN Jagadeesha, on behalf of CID, argued that the crypto wallet containing 31 Bitcoins worth Rs 9 crore was seized under mahazar on January 8, 2021. But later, another mahazar was drawn on January 22, 2021, making a simple assertion that it was only a mirror image and nothing was seized. It is alleged that the petitioners had the custody of accused Robin Khandelwal and had facilitated accused No.1 to transfer Rs 2,53,160 from the Paytm account of Robin and Bitcoin worth the same amount purchased from Wazir Exchange.

CID also contended that the petitioners, being investigating officers, along with other accused, colluded to destroy evidence for wrongful gain and to screen themselves from legal consequences. They kept accused Shriki and Robin Khandelwal in illegal police custody and provided them with all the liberty with a laptop to hack exchanges to get Bitcoins. They were also instrumental in providing the contraband Xanz to Shriki when he was in police custody and allowed him to send a mail to his friend.

CID said it showed that the petitioners, instead of investigating the crime, had used Robin and Shriki to illegally transfer Bitcoins. Subsequently, they were missing. The conduct of the petitioners revealed that they played with the accused for recovery of Bitcoins and material evidence, but subsequently destroyed the evidence.

Noting that the records primafacie establish that petitioners have attempted to destroy evidence and assisted the accused in custody during the investigation of the crimes to have unlawful gain, the court rejected the bail petitions.

HC reverses acquittal, sentences man for killing mom

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru:

THE Karnataka High Court sentenced an alcohol addict to imprisonment for the period of detention of two years already undergone by him, and payment of Rs 10,000 as fine for murdering his 60-year-old mother for advising him to go to work, by kicking and attacking her with a wooden club, at Chadav village of Sampaje in Madikeri taluk.

To atone for his act, the man should tender community service like housekeeping, gardening, etc., in the Government Primary School at Sampaje, the court said.

The division bench of Justice KS Mudagal and Justice TG Shivashankare Gowda passed the order while partly allowing the appeal filed by Madikeri Rural police, questioning the acquittal of the accused Anil NB (37) by the trial court in Kodagu in March 2017, from charges of murder of his mother Gangamma.

According to the prosecution, Anil was addicted to alcohol and had become wayward. On the day of the incident on April 4, 2015, his mother admonished him not to come home drunk, following which he assaulted her. Evidence on record goes to show that the accused had no intention of murdering his mother, but he assaulted her in such a fatal manner it caused an intestinal tear which led to her death, the court said.

"The trial court was in grave error in disbelieving the dying declaration on the ground that the same did not bear fitness

certificate, and was not supported by eyewitnesses and other family members of the victim," the court noted.

The court further said that in case of such assaults, even without external injuries, there is a possibility of such persons suffering fractures. But in this case, corresponding external injuries were found. Moreover, the cause of death was due to complications of abdominal injuries. The theory that she suffered such abdominal injuries due to over-consumption of alcohol was not probabilized by the accused. The contention of the accused deserves no merit, the court added.

Two attack friend with machete, held

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

SHANKARPURAM police have arrested two persons for allegedly attacking their friend with a machete on April 28.

The accused have been identified as Shashank, 20, a resident of Chamarajpet, and his friend Chandan, 20, of KG Nagar.

The victim, Harshith Kumar, 20, sells decorative flowers along with his father near Uma Theatre on Bull Temple Road.

Shashank, who suspected Kumar of chatting with his girlfriend, wanted to check the latter's mobile phone. But Kumar refused to give his phone to Shashank. However, when Shashank checked his girlfriend's phone, he found some messages she and Kumar had exchanged.

Soon, Shashank hatched a plan to attack Kumar along with Chandan. Around 8:30pm on April 28, Shashank and Chandan went to Kumar's shop and attacked him with a machete.

Kumar lost two fingers besides sustaining injuries on his right hand. As people gathered in front of the shop, the accused fled. Kumar was rushed to a nearby hospital. His parents filed a complaint with Shankarapuram police later.

MAY DAY

Thousands of workers from all over the state arrive at Freedom park to celebrate May Day on Wednesday | EXPRESS

Engg student from B'luru drowns in agri pond

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Chikkamagaluru

AN engineering student from Bengaluru, who came to his friend's house in Mudigere taluk for a tour, drowned when he tried to swim in an agricultural pond in the Gonibeedu police station limits recently. The deceased was identified as MP Akash (19), from Makaravallli village of Haveri district and currently residing in Bengaluru. It is said that after the death of his father, Akash has been living with his mother and brother in Bengaluru for the past 15 years.

Akash with his brother Kushal, friends Bharath and Shreyas was learnt to have arrived at one Rajgopal's estate in Gonibeeddu Koppalu in Mudiegere on April 27. All the youths are said to be the friends of Rajagopal's son. These four youths had gone to enjoy swimming in the agricultural pond in the Rajagopal's estate on Sunday evening. Akash, unaware of the depth of the pond, went deep and got stuck in the mire.

He went missing and despite efforts by his brother and friends, neither he nor his body was traceable. Even efforts of local diver Snake Arif, Gonibeedu police and Fire personnel to trace the body till late night went in vain. On Monday morning, deep sea diver from Mangaluru Eshwar Malpe had come and he with the help of Snake Arif succeeded in fishing out the body. The brother of deceased Kushal lodged a complaint at Gonibeedu police station.

EXPRESS READ

30-yr-old biker loses control, succumbs to head injury

Bengaluru: A 30-year-old motorcyclist died on the spot after he lost control over his bike on Lavelle Road. The deceased, identified as Sourav Bose, who was working in a private company, was a native of Tripura and a resident of Lavelle Road. According to the police, Bose and his friend had been attending a party at a friend's residence in Jayanagar and were on their way home when the accident occurred around 4 am on Wednesday. Bose, who was riding the bike, lost control, causing the bike to skid and resulting in a severe head injury. While Bose succumbed to his injuries at the spot, the pillion rider sustained minor injuries. The Cubbon Park traffic police have registered a case. ENS

NOTICE

NOT FOR SALE OF SCHEDULE PROPERTIES

Notice is hereby given to the public at large that my client Shri Mohsin Shariff S/o Late Dr. A.M. Shariff, Bangalore is an absolute owner of the immovable properties more fully described in the Schedule hereunder and hereinafter referred to as **"Schedule Properties"** According to the paper publication dated 25-04-2024 published in "Prajavani Newspaper" somebody has wrongly published for selling up scheduled properties which is a false publication by a third party who are not absolute owners.

SCHEDULE PROPERTIES

All that place and parcel of the land bearing (i) Survey No. 32/1, Measuring 2-00 Acres, (ii) Survey No. 32/3, Measuring 1-00 Acre, (iii) Survey No. 32/4, Measuring 1-00 Acre, (iv) Survey No. 32/5, Measuring 0-24 Guntas, (v) Survey No. 33/2, Measuring 0-30 Guntas (vi) Survey No. 33/3, Measuring 1 Acre 21 Guntas, situated at Sonnappanahalli Village, Jala Hobli, Yelahanka Taluk, Bangalore Urban District. **East by:** Jayaswamy's Land, **West by:** Shanthappa's Land, **North by:** Muthappa's Land, **South by:** Puttaraju's Land.

SOMASHEKAR C ANGADI B.Com., L.L.B.,
Advocate, AKASH ASSOCIATES
No. 541/82/2, 1st Floor, 7th Main,
OYO LODGE BUILDING, Vijayanagara
Bengaluru-560040, Mob: 7975968369 Off:080-41500035
DATE: 30-04-2024
PLACE: Bengaluru

PUBLIC NOTICE

The General Public is hereby notified that my client **Smt. Chowdamma** is the sole and absolute owner of the schedule Property.

The original GPA dated 03.03.2021 registered as doc.no.SRJ-4-00318-2020-21 and Stored in CD No.SRJD813 in the office of the Sub registrar, Sarjapura for the Property bearing Site No.36, Katha Sl.No.648, Assessment No.34/1, Swattina Sankhe 36, Situated at Chikkanekkundi Village, Sarjapura Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru, measuring East to West 25 feet, North to South 30 feet, in all measuring 750 Sq.ft. is misplaced/lost by client. In this connection, a police complaint has been lodged on 23.04.2024 vide Acknowledgment of Police Complaint vide Lost Report No.1025974/2024.

Any Person finds the document may handover the same to the undersigned **within 7 days** from this day. If the said document is misused by anybody, it shall not be binding on our client and he/she shall not be binding on our client and he/she shall be doing so at him /their own costs and risks.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing Site No.36, Katha Sl.No.648, Assessment No.34/1, Swattina Sankhe 36, Situated at Chikkanekkundi Village, Sarjapura Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru, measuring East to West 25 feet, North to South 30 feet, in all measuring 750 Square feet. and bounded: **EAST by** : Road, **WEST by** : Site No.21, **NORTH by** : Site No.35, **SOUTH by** : Site No.37

ASWATH .B, Advocate
#36 (317/C), 9 th A Main, 40 th Cross,
5th Block, Jayanagara Bangalore-560041.
Contact No : 9901944099
E-mail: aswath.bb@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

Herein I, Shanthmurthy Advocate Raichur hereby issue this public notice on behalf of ICICI Bank Ltd. Branch Raichur as under :-

That, **Sri. Y. Madhusudan Rao S/o Vadayavarlu** R/o Flat No. 103, Pyramid, RC Pearls Apartment, 1 stage J.P. Nagara Bangalore south, has intended to sell his property bearing Site No.24, formed by BDA with PID No.3204150112 situated at **4th Block, JP Nagar, 9th phase (EWS),** measuring E-W 20 ft x N-S 30 ft., **600 Sq. fts.,** and **Sri.Sanjay & Smt.Sarita Dilip Moraskar** have intended to purchase the said property from him and have offered the said property for mortgage in favour of ICICI Bank Branch Raichur for the loan and stated that the Original Allotment Letter Dated 05-06-1999 allotted by Bangalore Development Authority in favour of Narasimayya is misplaced and lost and instead of his efforts it not traced and the same is not deposited as a security to any loan. Further Sri. Y. Madhusudan Rao S/o Vadayavarlu has filed complaint regarding lost of said original Allotment Letter with Karnataka State Police as per Lost Article Report No. 468227 Dated 09-02-2023. If any person or persons having any claim in respect of the said Allotment Letter & said property be submitted with documentary proof within **7 days** from the date of receipt of this notice to the under signed, failing which my Client will proceed to sanction and release the loan on the security of the schedule property.

Place : Raichur.
Date : 01-05-2024

Sd/-
SHANTHMURTHY Advocate
H. No. 1-11-1128/431,
Kulsumbi Colony, Raichur.
M : 9986235305

PUBLIC NOTICE

The general public are here by informed that my client had entered into a registered agreement of sale dated 29-02-2024 in respect of the schedule property vide document number BSG-1-10893-2023-24 registered in the office of sub registrar, Basavanagudi Bangalore with its owner Sri.D.F.Selvaraj and Smt.S.Vasanthamary. It is notified that the sale deed would be completed at the earliest.The public and any other persons having interest/ right/tittle over the schedule property are requested to file their objections along with original deeds to the undersigned within 10 days from the date of paper publication. In the absence of such objections registration of sale deed would be completed.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of Residentially Converted site measuring 14157 Square Feet in Survey No.56/1 of Kadirenahalli Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk, presently bearing Municipal No.56/1, PID No.55-23-56/1 situated at M.K.Puttalingaiah Road, JHBCS 1st Stage, Padmanabha nagara, Bengaluru. Bounded on : **East by:** Private property, **West by:** M.K. Puttalingaiah Road, **North by:** Genaral Bipinrawath Park, **South by:** Road

H.L. Manjunatha, Advocate
No.96,1st main,4th cross,
Kalidasa Layout, Srinagar
Place: Bangalore **Bangalore-50**
Date: 02-05-2024 **Mob : 9342810851**

इंडियन बैंक Indian Bank इलाहाबाद ALLAHABAD
BASAVANAGUDI DVG ROAD BRANCH
Rathna Murthy Complex, Dr, DVG Gundappa Road, Basavanagudi, Bengaluru-560004

APPENDIX-IV-A " [See proviso to Rule 8(6)]

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Symbolic (whichever is applicable) possession dated 08/05/2023 of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of **Indian Bank, Basavanagudi DVG Road Branch,** Secured Creditor, will be sold on **"As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on 22.05.2024,** for recovery of **Rs.35,78,872/- (Rupees Thirty Five Lakh Seventy Eight Thousand Eight Hundred and Seventy Two Only)** as on 08/05/2023) due to the Indian Bank, Basavanagudi DVG Road branch, Secured Creditor, from **Mrs. Usha Mary Pinto,** House No.1005, in the Ground + 1st floor "Pavan Enclave" 16th B Main Road, Hal 2nd Stage Kodihalli Village, Bangalore .(Name and address of the borrower/guarantor).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY

Property bearing HASB No. 684/1B-C, Old Katha No 684/1-BC **Extent areas of land/building:** East to West: 128 ' 7.5 ft, North to South - 75'1.5 Ft+ 79'6" in all measuring 11,857 Sq.ft 16th B main Road, Hal 2nd Stage Kodihalli Village, Bangalore. **Boundaries for entire property:** East by: Tank, West -Private Property and BDA Road, North - Tank, South -Private Property.

Encumbrances on property	**Indian Bank , Basavanagudui DVG Road**
Reserve Price	**Rs.64,50,000/-**
EMD Amount	**Rs.6,45,000/-**
Bid incremental amount	**Rs.10,000/-**
Date and time of e-auction	**22/05/2024, 11.00 am to 4.00pm**
Property ID No.	**IDIB50463204507**

The specific details of the property intended to be brought to sale through e-auction mode are enumerated below:

Bidders are advised to visit the website (**www.mstcecommerce.com**) of our e auction service provider MSTC Ltd to participate in online bid. For Technical Assistance Please call MSTC HELPDESK No. 033-22901004 and other help line numbers available in service providers help desk. For Registration status with MSTC Ltd, please contact **ibapiop@mstcecommerce.com** and for EMD status please contact **ibapifin@mstcecommerce.com.**

For property details and photograph of the property and auction terms and conditions please visit: **https://ibapi.in** and for clarifications related to this portal, please contact help line number '18001025026' and '011-41106131'.

Bidders are advised to use Property ID Number mentioned above while searching for the property in the website with **https://ibapi.in** and **www.mstcecommerce.com.**

Date: 30.04.2024, Place: Bengaluru **Sd/- Authorised Officer, Indian Bank**

CITY UNION BANK LIMITED
Credit Recovery and Management Department
Administrative Office: No.24-B, Gandhi Nagar, Kumbakonam - 612001. **E-Mail id:** crmd@cityunionbank.in, **Phone:** 0435-2432322, **Fax:** 0435-2431746

TENDER-CUM-AUCTION SALE NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT 2002

The following property/ies mortgaged to **City Union Bank Limited** will be sold in Tender-cum-Public Auction by the Authorised Officer of the Bank, under Rule 8 (6) & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, under the SARFAESI Act, 2002, for recovery of a sum of **Rs.20,91,757/- (Rupees Twenty Lakh Ninety One Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty Seven only)** as on **24-04-2024** together with further interest to be charged from **25-04-2024** onwards and other expenses, any other dues to the Bank by the borrowers / guarantors **No.1) Mr. V. Sundar, S/o. P. Venkataswamy, at No.17, Near Airtel Tower, Opp. Yellamadevi Temple, Chandrapura, Attibele Hobli, Anekal Tk., Bangalore - 560099. No.2) Mr. V. Jaganath, S/o. P. Venkataswamy, at No.17, Near Airtel Tower, Opp. Yellamadevi Temple, Chandrapura, Attibele Hobli, Anekal Tk., Bangalore - 560099. No.3) M/s. Priya Chicken and Fish Center, Opp. SVS Complex, No.91/1, Anekal Main Road, Chandrapura Anekal Tk., Bangalore - 560099. Also at, M/s. Priya Chicken and Fish Center, No.1, Anekal Main Road, Chandrapura Anekal Tk., Bangalore - 560099. No.4) Mrs. B.M. Vanamala, W/o. V. Sundar, at No.17, Near Airtel Tower, Opp. Yellamadevi Temple, Chandrapura, Attibele Hobli, Anekal Tk., Bangalore - 560099.**

Note : That our **333 - Bengaluru-Bommasandra Branch** has also extended Financial Assistance (SECURED OD WITHOUT DP: 512120020014435) dated **27-09-2017** requested by No.3 of you represented by No.1 of you as Proprietor for which Nos.1 & 4 of you stood as Co-Obligants and Nos.2 & 4 of you stood as Guarantors for the facility for a Total Amount of **Rs.10,00,000/-** at a ROI of **13.75%.** The same has been also classified as **NPA** on **29-03-2018** and the outstanding balance as on **24-04-2024** is **Rs.14,34,311/-** plus further interest and penal interest of **2.00%** with monthly rests to be charged from **25-04-2024** till the date of realization.

Immovable Property Mortgaged to our Bank
Schedule - A : (Property Owned by Mr. V. Sundar & V. Jaganath Sons of P. Venkataswamy)

All that piece and parcel of immovable Property bearing Site No.1016, Janjar No.902, as per Chandrapura TMC Assessment Katha No.999/1016/780 formed in converted land bearing Survey No.88, Which has been converted from Agricultural to Non-Agricultural Residential Purpose by the Order No.BDS.ALN.SR(A)25/1991-92 dated **19-11-1991** situated at Chandrapura Village, Attibele Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore Urban District. Measuring:- East to West - 41+43/2 feet and North to South - 30 feet in all measuring 1,260 Sq.ft., with RCC Roofed constructed building consisting of Ground, First, Second and Third Floors approximately 36 square of vitrified Flooring and bounded as follows:- East by - Private Property, West by - Road, North by - Site No.1017, South by - Site No.1015.

Reserve Price: Rs.78,00,000/-
(Rupees Seventy Eight Lakh only)

AUCTION DETAILS

Date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale	Venue
10-06-2024	**City Union Bank Limited, Bengaluru-Bommasandra Branch,** 17, 5th Cross, Vidyanagar, Next to Lark Hotel, Hosur Road, Bommasandra, Bengaluru Rural, Karnataka - 560099. Telephone No.080-27833200; Cell No.9341822834.

Terms and Conditions of Tender-cum-Auction Sale:

(1) The intending bidders should be present in person for the auction and participate personally and give a declaration in writing to the effect that he/she is bidding for himself / herself. **(2)** The intending bidders may obtain the Tender Forms from **The Manager, City Union Bank Limited, Bengaluru-Bommasandra Branch 17, 5th Cross, Vidyanagar, Next to Lark Hotel, Hosur Road, Bommasandra, Bengaluru Rural, Karnataka - 560099. (3)** The intending bidders should submit their bids only in the Tender Form prescribed in sealed envelopes addressed to **The Authorised Officer, City Union Bank Ltd.,** together with a Pay Order / Demand Draft for an EMD of **10%** of the Reserve Price, drawn in favour of **"City Union Bank Ltd.", on or before 12.00 Noon** on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. **(4)** For inspection of the property and other particulars, the intending purchaser may contact: **Telephone No.080-27833200; Cell No.9341822834. (5)** The property/ies are sold on "As-is-where-is", "As-is-what-is" and "whatever-there is" basis. **(6)** The sealed tenders will be opened in the presence of the intending bidders at **01.00 p.m.** on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. Though in general the sale will be by way of closed tenders, the Authorised Officer may, at his sole discretion, conduct an Open Auction among the interested bidders who desire to quote a bid higher than the one received in the closed tender process, and in such an event, the sale shall be conferred on the person making highest bid. The sale, however, is subject to confirmation of City Union Bank Limited. **(7)** The successful bidder shall have to pay **25% (inclusive of EMD paid)** of the sale amount **immediately** on completion of sale and the balance amount of **75%** within **15 days** from the date of confirmation of sale, failing which the initial deposit of **25%** shall be forfeited. **(8)** The Sale Certificate will be issued by the Authorised Officer in favour of the successful purchaser only after receipt of the entire sale consideration within the time limit stipulated herein. **(9)** The successful purchaser shall bear the charges/fees payable for conveyance, such as stamp duty, registration fee etc., as applicable under law. **(10)** The successful bidder should pay the statutory dues (lawful house tax, electricity charges and other dues), TDS, GST if any, due to Government, Government Undertaking and local bodies. **(11)** The Authorised Officer shall have all the powers to accept or reject the bids or postpone or cancel the sale without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Place: Kumbakonam, Date: 30-04-2024 **Authorised Officer**

Regd. Office: 149, T.S.R. (Big) Street, Kumbakonam, Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu - 612001, **CIN -** L65110TN1904PLC001287, **Telephone No.**0435-2402322, **Fax:** 0435-2431746, **Website:** www.cityunionbank.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that, my client **Mrs. GEETA DEVI GOYAL**, W/o. Late. Shrikishan Das Goyal, and her son Mr. PRASHANT GOYAL, both are residing at No. 4c-311, CMR Road, Opp. Jalvayu Vihar, 3rd Block, HRBR Layout, Kalyan Nagar Post, Bangalore-560 043, have intends to purchase below mentioned Schedule Property from MR. A. ROCHE AROCKIARAJ, S/o. L. Anthony Samy Pillai, Mr. K. PERUMAL, S/o. Late. A. Krishnan and MR. THULASIDHARAN PERUMAL, S/o. K. Perumal all are residing at Bangalore.

Any person/s having any objection/s regarding the said sale transaction may contact the undersigned advocate with relevant documents **within Five (5) days** from the date of this publication, failing which it shall be deemed that there is no objection of any nature and my client will complete the sale transaction.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of property bearing BDA Site No. 2C-809, Present BBMP Katha No. 2C-809, in PID No. 88-250-2C-809, Situated at 1st Block, HRBR Layout (Hennur Road Banaswadi Road Layout), Bangalore, a layout formed by the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA), presently BBMP Ward No. 27, measuring East to West: 15.25 Meters and North to South: 24.40 Meters, totally measuring 372.10 Sq. Meters, and bounded on the: **East by :** Site No. 2C-811, **West by :** Site No. 2C-807, **North by :** Site No. 2AC-810, **South by :** 2 nd Cross Road.

Consisting of RCC Roofed 1500 Sq. feet on the Ground Floor, 750 Sq. feet on the First Floor residential building with all amenities.

Sd/- **B.V. MANJUNATHA**, Advocate
No. 5, 1st floor, GNR Complex, Nehru road,
Kammanahalli, Bangalore-560 084.
Cell No. 98860 57247/ 98452 15207

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is inform and whatsoever it may concern that my client This is inform and whatsoever it may concern that my client **Sri. K.C. Manjunatha** S/o. K. Channamariyappa, Aged about 43 years, R/at.Kannamangala Village, Kasaba Hobli, Devanahalli Taluk, Bangalore Rural District has intending to purchase the schedule Property from its present owner viz.,**Smt. Nirmala Rama Reddy** W/o. Rama Reddy, and family members, R/at. No.280/4, Reddy Farm, BEML Layout, 3rd Stage, Rajarajeshwarinagar, Bangalore-560 098.

If any third party/s Person/s has/have any manner of right, title, interest, demand, clients, charges or lien over the schedule property they are hear by requested to file the objections to this sale transaction or mortgage of said property to the financial intuitions/Bank/third parties and shell informed/said object the same in writing along with the photocopies, related such claims, objections through the RPAD with the under mentioned address within **10 days** from the publication of this notice.

If no valid claim/objections are received by the undersigned as aforesaid, my client shall proceed to complete the sale transaction deeming that apart from the aforesaid owner no one else has/have any manner of right or claim or interest whatsoever over the schedule property.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

Item No.1: All that piece and parcel of agricultural property bearing property bearing **Sy.No.16, measuring 4 acre 07 guntas, situated at Sanne Amanikere Village, Kasaba Hobli, Devanahalli Taluk, Bangalore Rural District.,**

Item No.2: All that piece and parcel of agricultural property bearing property bearing **Sy.No.17/1, measuring 2 acre 07 guntas, situated atSanne Amanikere Village, Kasaba Hobli, Devanahalli Taluk, Bangalore Rural District.**

K.V. MAHENDRA KUMAR, Advocate
1st Floor, Abhay Complex, Above Union Bank, Sulibele Road, Devanahalli-562 110
Mob:9538276877

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is inform and whatsoever it may concern that my client This is inform and whatsoever it may concern that my client **Sri. Keshava.R,** S/o. Ramachandrappa, Aged about 39 years, R/at.Mandibele Village, Vijayapura Hobli, Devanahalli Taluk, Bangalore Rural District has intending to purchase the schedule Property from its present owner viz.,**Smt.Chowdamma** W/o. Late Venkatappa D/o. Nagabyrappa, and family members, R/at. Ward No.12, Ambedkar Street, Vijayapura Town, Devanahalli Taluk, Bangalore Rural Duistrict.

If any third party/s Person/s has/have any manner of right, title, interest, demand, clients, charges or lien over the schedule property they are hear by requested to file the objections to this sale transaction or mortgage of said property to the financial intuitions/Bank/third parties and shell informed/said object the same in writing along with the photocopies, related such claims, objections through the RPAD with the under mentioned address within **10 days** from the publication of this notice.

If no valid claim/objections are received by the undersigned as aforesaid, my client shall proceed to complete the sale transaction deeming that apart from the aforesaid owner no one else has/have any manner of right or claim or interest whatsoever over the schedule property.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of Un-Developed Residential Converted Property bearing **Sy.No.460/2 measuring 1 acre, situated atVijayapura Village, Vijayapura Hobli, Devanahalli Taluk, Bangalore Rural District.**

K.V. MAHENDRA KUMAR, Advocate
1st Floor, Abhay Complex, Above Union Bank, Sulibele Road, Devanahalli-562 110.
Mob:9538276877

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BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

INVITATION FOR TENDER (Through KPP-Portal only)

BWSSB, invites tenders in Two Stage Tender system from registered Agencies for the following works.

Office of the Chief Engineer (Project), 3rd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru-560009.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Amount put to tender / EMD Amount
No.: BWSSB/CE(P)/ACE/(Cstr&DCW)/TA/161/2024-25		**Dated: 30.04.2024**
1.	Procurement of 276 Nos of 100mm dia Removable Mechanism Type Water Meters conforming to IS:2373/1981 or ISO:4064/ 1/EEC/MID	**Rs.1,19,78,124** / **Rs.2,00,000/-**

For the above works the Last date and time for Receipt of Tenders will be on : **09.05.2024 before 16:00 hrs.** and the date of opening of the Technical Tender will be opened on : **13.05.2024 at 12:00 noon.**

No.: BWSSB/CE(P)/ACE/(Cstr&DCW)/TA/162/2024-25		**Dated: 30.04.2024**
2.	Procurement of 257 Nos of 50mm dia & 175 nos of 80mm dia Removable Mechanism Type Water Meters conforming to IS:2373/1981 or ISO:4064/1/EEC/MID (4th Call).	**Rs.1,19,05,968/-** / **Rs.1,79,000/-**

For the above works the Last date and time for Receipt of Tenders will be on : **09.05.2024 before 15:00 hrs.** and the date of opening of the Technical Tender will be opened on : **13.05.2024 at 12:00 noon.** **Sd/- Chief Engineer (Project)**

The details regarding participation in the tendering process and tender can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** For further details contact the above signed office during working hours.

ECI Approved No.CS/14/SCM/2024 Dated: 19.04.2024 DIPR/CP/RO51/AAPL/2024-25

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QuoteExpress IT ALWAYS SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE UNTIL IT'S DONE) NELSON MANDELA

WILL ENSURE OBSCENE VIDEOS NOT POSTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA: Dr G

Says within 24 hrs, Prajwal will have to appear for probe; SIT also working on how to bring MP back to India for which Centre's help is needed

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru/ Davanagere

KARNATAKA Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara said on Wednesday that the State Government will write to the agencies concerned to prevent miscreants from posting the obscene videos allegedly involving Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna on social media.

Speaking to reporters in Davanagere, Dr Parameshwara said action will be taken against those who share those videos on social media. "We will ensure that these videos are posted online. We will write to the agencies concerned," the minister added.

Dr Parameshwara said that there was no question of protecting anyone, including Prajwal in the alleged sex scandal.

He said that based on a letter by the Karnataka State Women's Commission, the State Government constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) considering the seriousness of the issue. He also said that the government will also give protection to the victims.

Dr Parameshwara also said that the police have given notice under the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) to the accused, and based on this, they have to appear within 24 hours. "We cannot arrest anyone, there are laws and procedures. It is not correct to say that we are defending them...otherwise we would not have constituted an SIT. We will act accordingly once we get the report," he said.

When asked about state JDS chief HD Kumaraswamy blaming DCM DK Shivakumar as the mastermind behind the entire episode, Dr Parameshwara, speaking to reporters in Bengaluru, said, "The SIT will give the answer. I cannot say anything now."

Later in the day, the Home Minister went to Davanagere where he told reporters that law and order is better under the Congress government compared to the previous BJP government. He said that the Central intelligence agencies had failed to stop Prajwal from leaving India. "Just because he escaped to a different country, we cannot wait. We have issued a notice, and as per that, he has to be here within 24 hours. SIT is also working on how to bring Prajwal back to India, for which they need the Central Government's help," he said.

Dr Parameshwara said that law and order and police action are swift in Karnataka now compared to the earlier BJP regimes. "Our police action was laudable in nabbing the accused in Bengaluru's Rameshwaram Cafe blast as they gave clues to the NIA," he said. Even in Hubbali's Neha Hiremath murder case, the State Government has handed over the probe to the CID, he added.

Members of the Progressive Women's Forum protest against JDS MP Prajwal Revanna in Hassan on Wednesday | EXPRESS

'HDK had prior knowledge of pendrive'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Yadgir/Bengaluru

SLAMMING JDS state president HD Kumaraswamy and BJP leaders, KPCC president and Deputy CM DK Shivakumar said if they have respect towards women, let them stand with the victims who are in distress now. His brother MP DK Suresh alleged that Kumaraswamy knew about the existence of the pendrive.

Speaking to reporters in Yadgir on Wednesday, Shivakumar said if these leaders respect women, they should have gone to the victim's house and extended their support.

On the allegation made by Kumaraswamy that Shivakumar had prior knowledge about the pendrive, Shivakumar said their party spokespersons informed about Hassan BJP leader Devarajegowda meeting with Kumaraswamy. Devarajegowda had also informed about this to BJP leaders earlier. When asked about Suraj Revanna meeting Shivakumar, DKS said it's better to ask Suraj about their meeting.

In Bengaluru, Suresh too alleged that Kumaraswamy knew about the pendrive. He said if they had known about the pendrive, they would have released it much before polls. "Kumaraswamy is now trying to put the blame on the Congress. It is not important that Kumaraswamy is making the allegation, what is important is to give justice to those victims. There is a need to give protection to the victims," he said.

KSE son Kantesh gets injunction against media from local court

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Shivamogga

EXPELLED BJP leader and independent candidate KS Eshwarappa's son **Kanthesh KE** has obtained a temporary injunction order from a local court in Bengaluru, preventing the media from telecasting or broadcasting or publishing any obscene photos, videos, screenshots or audios pertaining to him.

Kanthesh brought the original suit (OS) against the Publishers and Broadcasters Welfare Association of Karnataka, and several national and state media outlets and social media platforms. The media outlets include local newspapers based out of Shivamogga.

The order was issued ex-parte, and passed by the sixth additional city civil and sessions judge on April 27. Kanthesh's advocate M Vinod Kumar submitted his arguments on a prima facie case, contending that the defendants are uploading and publishing several matters against the plaintiff on internet platforms, TV channels, newspapers etc (in press and print media) which are per se defamatory in nature. He read out from several printouts to make out a prima facie case as to how defendants have tried to tarnish the name of the plaintiff.

The advocate argued that attempts are being made at a crucial time where parliamentary elections are going on. The plaintiff has sought temporary injunction restraining the defendants, their agents, henchmen or persons acting through them from telecasting, broadcasting or publishing any obscene photos, videos, screenshots or audios pertaining to him in their media, till the disposal of the suit. The next hearing is on August 3.

Kanthesh's father Eshwarappa is contesting from Shivamogga, upset over his son not getting a Lok Sabha ticket from Haveri. Eshwarappa blamed former CM BS Yediyurappa and his son and state BJP president BY Vijayendra for being overlooked, and vowed to free the BJP from the father-son duo.

Cong MLA's intimate video call goes viral

Bengaluru: Amid Hassan JDS MP Prajwal Revanna's alleged sex scandal case, a video call of Ramanagara Congress MLA Iqbal Hussain having an "intimate" conversation with a Congress worker has gone viral on social media. The 2.27-minute video was uploaded on Facebook with various handles including 'HD Kumaraswamy for CM'. Since Iqbal is the Man Friday of DCM and KPCC president D K Shivakumar, his detractors are asking him to expel the former if he can. Iqbal, who is campaigning in Bidar for the party candidate, told media persons that it might be a conspiracy by his rivals and he will consider lodging a complaint with the police after going through the details. Meanwhile, MP DK Suresh said if the victim complains, then action will be taken. When asked about expelled BJP leader KS Eshwarappa's son Kantesh getting a temporary injunction order from a court, preventing the media from telecasting or broadcasting obscene photos, videos, screenshots or audios related to him, Suresh said there is a need to bring a law to prevent misuse of power and also prevent damage of private life.

HDK dragged DKS name for damage control: Cong

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

KARNATAKA Pradesh Congress Committee media and communication head Ramesh Babu on Wednesday claimed that JDS state president HD Kumaraswamy dragged the name of Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivkumar into the alleged sexual exploitation scandal involving Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna as Home Minister Amit Shah asked him to control the damage.

"Kumaraswamy alleged that Shivakumar was behind the pendrive issue. Because on Tuesday morning, Shah called Kumaraswamy and also spoke to BJP leader BS Yediyurappa as the incident has damaged the BJP at the national level. Shah questioned them as to why they did not fix the case earlier," Babu said at a press conference.

Babu, who was a JDS MLC in the past, alleged that there was a feud between the families of Kumaraswamy and his brother H D Revanna over contesting the elections.

"Prajwal and his mother Bhavani Revanna eyed Hunsur, KR Nagar and Hassan assembly seats to contest but Kumaraswamy did not allow it. Instead, Kumaraswamy's wife Anitha contested the polls. Because of the internal strife, former PM H D Deve Gowda sacrificed his Hassan LS seat to Prajwal in 2019," he said.

"Kumaraswamy is unnecessarily blaming the Congress, Shivakumar and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah," he said and alleged that BJP leaders Devaraje Gowda and Preetham Gowda met Kumaraswamy and spoke about the pen drive much before Prajwal was made the NDA candidate.

Conspiracy behind sexual assault case: Revanna

BR UDAYA KUMAR @Holenarasipur

FORMER minister HD Revanna, who is accused no 1 in the alleged sexual assault case, held a series of rituals at his residence in Holenarasipur town on Tuesday.

Poojas for different deities in the name of family members, especially his son Prajwal Revanna -- the accused no 2, were held from 5.05 am and concluded by 11.55 am.

Revanna and his wife Bhavani also made special offerings at Deveshwara temple in Haradanahalli and Lakshmivenkateshwara temple in Holenarasipur town in Prajwal's Revanna name before taking part in the homas at their residence.

Sources said that a group of four priests performed Shatru Samhara and Shanti homas, in which the Revanna couple took part.

It is said that Revanna, who seems upset with the case filed against him, has stopped talking to his close confidants and party senior leaders. Highly placed sources said his brother and JDS state president HD Kumaraswamy too is upset with the pen drive scandal and has maintained distance from Revanna.

Former minister HD Revanna's house in Holenarasipur town wears a deserted look

His residence on Hassan-Mysuru road in Holenarasipur, which used to be filled with party workers and villagers, has been deserted since the scandal broke out a few days ago. No JDS leader too has visited his residence since then.

Revanna, who reportedly came from Bengaluru to Holenarasipur late on Tuesday night, didn't come out of his residence till all the rituals were completed on Wednesday.

Around 2 pm, Revanna and Bhavani boarded a car to go to Bengaluru. Seeing a gathering of media persons outside his residence, who had been waiting since morning, Revanna said he will face the probe by the Special Investigation Team, constituted to investigate the case. He also said he has never been desperate under any circumstances.

He said it is a conspiracy hatched against him and he will decide the next course of action soon. "I have not committed any mistake and I have the strength to face any situation," he added.

The SIT on Monday pasted a notice on the door of his residence asking him to appear before it for an inquiry.

Revanna, who is a strong believer, often organises poojas at his home by priests from Sringeri, Mysuru and Tirupati.

Ahead of the 2019 Parliamentary elections, the family of JDS supremo HD Deve Gowda family held mega Shatru Samhara and Ashta Digbandha rituals before Prajwal contested the election, which he won.

EXPRESS READ

Rahul questions PM's silence on allegations

Bengaluru: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's silence on the allegations against JDS MP Prajwal Revanna. As usual, Narendra Modi has maintained silence on the gruesome crimes against women in Karnataka, Rahul posted on X. He said the PM will have to answer why they promoted "the monster who exploited hundreds of daughters" just for the sake of votes. "After all, how did such a big criminal escape from the country with such ease?" he asked. "Is being part of Modi's 'political family' a 'guarantee of safety' for criminals?" he questioned. **ENS**

Allow us, we will take action within 24 hrs: Ashoka

Bengaluru: Slamming Chief Minister Sididaramaiah, Leader of Opposition R Ashoka said if the state government does not have a hold on the police, then why put the blame on Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "Let the CM step down and we will take action against Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna within 24 hours," he told reporters on Wednesday. Stating that Prajwal is not their MP, Ashoka said the JDS chose their candidates and constituencies. In the previous polls, the Congress had worked for Prajwal's victory as he was the Congress-JDS candidate, he added. "When Prajwal was leaving the country, what was the Karnataka police doing? The Congress government and state intelligence has failed. Let Siddaramaiah step down, and within 24 hours, we will take action. In Karnataka, the government does not have a hold on the police. They are blaming the PM for their failure which is not correct," he said. **ENS**

Most deplorable chapter in Karnataka's history: Jignesh Mevani

Vijayapura: Congress leader and Gujarat MLA Jignesh Mevani said Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna's alleged sex scandal is the most deplorable, despicable and shameful chapter in the history of Karnataka and India. Addressing media persons on Wednesday, he accused PM Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP chief JP Nadda of supporting Prajwal. He said BJP leaders were aware of the background of Prajwal. He appealed to women of Karnataka to make at least one video expressing their disgust against such a heinous and shameful incident and circulate them. **ENS**

'Book suo motu POCSO case against Prajwal'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Chitradurga

SENIOR advocate Dr MC Narahari on Wednesday urged the State government to immediately book a POCSO case on suo motu basis against Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna, alleging that he has molested many minor girls. Addressing a press conference in the city, he said that any delay in the probe may derail investigation. Considering the seriousness of the issue and that he belongs to the high-profile political family of former PM HD Deve Gowda, action should be initiated against him immediately, he said.

Narahari also urged the SIT to swiftly arrest HD Revanna and Prajwal Revanna, and bring them to the investigation table so the truth will come out. He questioned whether the SIT would allow a common man who had committed a similar offence to roam free.

Terming Prajwal as one of the worst MPs of the country, he said JDS ally BJP, which was vociferous on all issues till recently, has gone totally silent on the Prajwal Revanna case. It amounts to selective outrage, he said, and urged BJP leaders to voice their concern.

'MODI, SHAH, NADDA HELPED PRAJWAL FLEE COUNTRY'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru:

AICC media and communication chief Supriya Shrinate on Wednesday urged the BJP to apologise to the women of the country, alleging that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP national president JP Nadda had helped Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna flee the country hours before the Karnataka government set up the SIT to probe the alleged sex scandal against him.

The BJP leadership backed Prajwal as the NDA candidate despite knowing he had allegedly sexually exploited hundreds of women, she said.

Addressing a press conference, Shrinate said the National Commission for Women, which had issued notices to rival party leaders in other cases, should write to the trio if it is courageous enough to do so.

She questioned how the accused had left the country within a few hours of knowing that the SIT would be formed. "Home Minister Amit Shah knows when Priyanka Gandhi is going to see her daughter. But he doesn't know that such an accused person can escape? PM Modi already knew about the evil deeds done by Prajwal because BJP leader Devaraje Gowda had sent an email to Modi, JP Nadda and Amit Shah in December 2023," she charged.

AICC media and communication chief Supriya Shrinate addresses the media at the KPCC office in Bengaluru on Wednesday | NAGARAJA GADEKL

> **Home Minister Amit Shah knows when Priyanka Gandhi is going to see her daughter. But he doesn't know that such an accused person can escape? PM Modi already knew about the evil deeds done by Prajwal** — Supriya Shrinate, AICC media and communication chief

"Despite knowing all this, Modi held Prajwal's hand at a public meeting in Mysuru... Prajwal Revanna, who has committed a monstrous act, is a member of the 'Modi parivar'," she thundered. "It is shocking to see what he has done as he had filmed himself committing the act on thousands of women. This is not a sex scandal but the country's biggest rape case," she said.

She rejected allegations that Prajwal's driver had shared the pen drive containing sleazy videos with Congress leaders.

Tamil Nadu Water Resources Minister Duraimurugan announced on Wednesday that the state government will move Supreme Court to secure its rightful share of Cauvery water from Karnataka. He said, "Even if Karnataka has ample water, they refuse to fulfil our demands. We will seek our due share through legal channels in the Supreme Court."

Owaisi: If Jagan wins, he will continue Muslim quota

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Hyderabad

IF YSRC's Jagan Mohan Reddy wins in Andhra Pradesh, he will continue with reservations for Muslims, said AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi on Wednesday, adding that people will teach a lesson to the TDP's N Chandrababu Naidu and Jana Sena's Pwana Kalyan for joining hands with the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

Addressing a rally at Goshamahal on Wednesday, Owaisi, while referring to PM Narendra Modi's assertion on Tuesday that Muslims would not be given reservations as long as he was alive, maintained that quota to Muslims in Telangana was not given on the basis of religion. "In Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, reservation to Muslims has not been provided on the basis of religion but on socio-economic conditions."

Alleging that the PM was spreading hatred, Owaisi asserted, "The 4% reservation is not provided to Muslims in Telangana by snatching the rights of SCs, STs, and OBCs." The four-time parliamentarian asked Chandrabu Naidu whether he could question the stand of PM Modi on Muslim reservations. "I am sure that Jagan Mohan Reddy will win in AP, continue with reservations for Muslims, and save the constitution of India."

The AIMIM MP also claimed that the BJP wanted to change the Constitution and scrap provisions of Articles 29 and 30, which aim to protect the interests of religious, linguistic, and cultural minorities in India. "If a person of Tamil Nadu wants to open a school in Hyderabad, these sections (29 and 30) allow him, as minorities, to live here. But Modi and Amit Shah will remove these sections."

ECI bars KCR from campaigning for 48 hours

Ex-CM can't take part in public meetings

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Hyderabad

THE Election Commission of India (ECI) barred BRS president and former Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao from election campaign for 48 hours beginning from 8 pm on Wednesday for violating the model code of conduct (MCC) during a press conference on April 5 in Sircilla.

Reacting to the EC's decision, Rao at a road-show in Mahabubabad said the EC did not send any notices to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, who used derogatory language. "If the EC barred me from election campaign for 48 hours, BRS activists will work hard for 96 hours," Rao declared.

Meanwhile, ECI principal secretary Malay Mallick said in the order: "the Commission under Article 324 of the Constitution of India, bars K Chandrasekhar Rao from holding any public meetings, public processions, public rallies, shows and interviews, public utterances in media (electronic, print, social media) in connection with the ongoing elections for 48 hours from 8 pm on May 1".

Based on the complaint by Congress leader G Niranjan, the ECI took this decision. The complainant informed the EC that KCR made derogatory comments on April 5 in Rajanna-Sircilla district against the Congress party during a press conference. While in Sircilla, Rao made certain comments against Congress leaders including 'sons of dogs, 'lathkhors', 'chavata daddammalu' and other words. Later, the EC sought clarification from KCR on this. In his reply, Rao told the EC that "the officers incharge of election in Telangana and Sircilla are not Telugu people and they hardly understand local dialect of Telugu. The complaint is made by the Congress by picking some sentences from the press conference out of context. The English translation of the sentences is not correct and twisted," Rao replied.

The ECI further noted that KCR had been issued an order in May, 2019 for violating model code of conduct in Karimnagar. Another advisory was given in November, 2023 to follow MCC in letter and spirit, when he made certain comments in Banswada during general elections.

"The EC found that KCR has not only violated the provisions of MCC in Siricilla. but also violated MCC provisions during past elections," the EC's latest order said.

BRS working president KT Rama Rao took to X to say, "What is this anarchy? Zero action against [PM] Modi despite thousands of citizens' complaints. No action against foulmouthed 'cheap' minister of Telangana Revanth. Why are the BJP and Congress so shaken by 'KCR Poru Baata'? People of Telangana will give a befitting answer to your arrogance and institutional abuse."

AMIT SHAH DOCTORED VIDEO

'Not posted from Revanth's personal handle'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Hyderabad

THE advocate representing Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy before the officials of Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations (IFSO), Special Cell, New Delhi, in connection with a case regarding a doctored video of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, stated that the video was not posted from the personal account of the TPCC president. Furthermore, Revanth's legal team requested an extension of four weeks to provide additional responses.

"How is the Ministry of Home Affairs issuing notices to a politician," the chief minister wondered during a press conference in Hyderabad in the evening.

In a brief response to the IFSO, CM's advocate, Soumya Guptha, stated earlier in the day that the notice assumed that the chief minister's account was used, which she clarified was untrue. "Everyone knows what the personal account and what the official account is," the advocate said in Delhi.

Guptha clarified that the doctored video was not posted from Revanth's personal account. Meanwhile, another advocate, M Ramachandra Reddy, also sent a letter to the IFSO requesting a four-week extension. As per the notice, Revanth was expected to appear before the IFSO on Wednesday to respond to the queries. However, due to his involvement in the election campaign, his legal team represented him.

On April 29, the IFSO team, during their visit to Gandhi

Bhavan, the Telangana Congress headquarters in Hyderabad, summoned Revanth and five other Congress leaders for allegedly morphing and circulating a video of Shah's statement on reservations. The video portrayed the Union home minister stating that the BJP would abolish reservations for SC, ST and OBCs.

Responding to the summons, Revanth, at an election rally in Korutula, Jagtial district, this afternoon, asked, "Will cases be filed against me for advocating reservations for SC, ST and OBCs? The Delhi police want me to come to the station. How can I halt my election campaign and comply? What injustice is this, Amit Shah?" "Both [PM] Narendra Modi and Amit Shah hold a grudge against me and have filed a case in Delhi over reservations," he alleged.

> **Will cases be filed against me for advocating reservations for SC, ST and OBCs? The Delhi police want me to come to the station. How can I halt my election campaign and comply?**
>
> Revanth Reddy, CM of Telangana

BRAVING THE HEAT

An elderly vegetable vendor shields herself from the burning sun, even as she waits for customers at Koyambedu in Chennai on Wednesday

TN records 20,701 MW power demand

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Chennai

AS temperature soars, Tamil Nadu's power demand and consumption hit a new record of 20,701 mega watt (MW) and 454.320 million units respectively, on Tuesday. The officials expect the demand to spike further to 22,000 MW in the coming days.

A senior official at Tangedco told TNIE that anticipating the surge, the power utility has initiated necessary proactive measures, such as power purchases and strengthening infrastructure, including poles and transformers. "We have also tied up with private players to procure electricity and will receive 4,500 MW round-the-clock till June," he said.

Despite the efforts, the power grid is under strain due to overload, leading to occasional shutdowns. However, Tangedco hopes to tide over the demand-supply issue without much ado during this summer.

As a water crisis looms simultaneously, Tangedco's hydro power generation has also taken a major blow. Water levels in Kunda, Avalanche and Emerald dams have hit a rock bottom, crippling hydel power generation from the three dams. They blame it on the poor rainfalls in the last monsoon and a record rise in temperature in Nilgiris district.

Tension in K'buragi as BJP protests attack on Lingayat family

BJP workers shift party candidate Dr Umesh Jadhav to an ambulance after he fainted in Kalaburagi on Wednesday

RAMAKRISHNA BADSESHI
@ Kalaburagi

TENSION prevailed for nearly six hours on the national highway (Jewargi road) near Kotnur Mutt on the outskirts of Kalaburagi on Wednesday when BJP workers staged a protest against the attack on a Lingayat family on Tuesday evening.

A mob belonging to a particular community had attacked Sangamesh, who is accused in the recent Ambedkar statue desecration case in Kalaburagi, and his family members. Sangamesh was released on bail on Tuesday. BJP MP Umesh Jadhav, who is contesting the LS elections from Gulbarga constituency, participated in the dharna for more than two hours. However, Dr Jadhav was rushed to Jayadeva Hospital in Kalaburagi after he collapsed due to excessive heat. Former MLA Dattatreya Patil Revoor, BJP city unit president Chandu Patil, and district unit president Shivaraj Patil participated in the protest.

Kalaburagi police commissioner Chetan R rushed to the spot and tried to pacify the agitators to withdraw their protest. But the protesters did not pay heed to his request and sought to know why the police did not register a complaint when Sangamesh and his family members went to the local station. They insisted that deputy commissioner Fouzia Tarannum come to the spot and receive the complaint. But the DC was busy with election work at Afzalpur.

Five arrested

Kalaburagi police commissioner Chetan R told TNIE on Wednesday evening that five people were taken into custody in connection with the attack on Sangamesh and his family members.

Meanwhile, Gulbarga-Dakshin Congress MLA Allamaprabhu Patil and former mayor Sharanakumar Modi arrived at the spot to pacify the protesters. They told them that they had spoken with the DC and she would come there to receive the complaint. The protesters burnt tyres on the road and raised slogans against the Congress government and police. They later moved towards Rama Mandir Circle to continue their agitation.

By then, Tarannum arrived there and promised the protesters that those who had assaulted Sangamesh and his family members would be arrested within 24 hours. The protesters alleged that there is no protection to the Lingayat community from the government, and raised slogans such as "Jai Shri Ram", and "Modi, Modi".

'Permit student to wear adult diaper'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Madurai

THE Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court recently directed the National Testing Agency (NTA) to permit a 19-year-old woman to appear for the NEET (UG) examination on May 5 wearing an adult diaper and permit her to change the diaper once or twice during the exam hours, considering her medical condition.

Justice GR Swaminathan issued the order based on a petition filed by the student seeking directions to the NTA in this regard. The court stated that when the petitioner was four years of age, she met with an accident, suffered burn injuries on her face and was scalded by hot oil. The student is being treated for LETM/NMO/Spectrum Disorder/Neurogenic Bladder on an OPD basis. Her doctor has certified that she lacks bladder control, and must wear a diaper continuously, which also has to be changed frequently.

The court stated that the information bulletin issued by NTA mentions dress codes, but the clauses do not address the petitioner's case. In another notification, it is mentioned that diabetic students will be allowed to carry eatables such as sugar tablets/fruits and transparent water bottles to the examination halls. It was also laid down that candidates would be frisked and biometric attendance would be taken again on entry after toilet breaks. The court said that the petitioner's record clearly states that she has special needs and has to take toilet breaks.

Ramaiah varsity offers scholarship to 84 students

Bengaluru: Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences awarded MS Ramaiah Memorial Scholarship Scheme 2023-24 to 84 students. The beneficiaries included students from disciplines like Engineering, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Nursing, Management, Commerce and Law, Life and Allied Health Sciences, Hospitality Management and pure sciences. The scholarship was introduced in memory of the founder chairman, Dr MS Ramaiah and will be given to first-year students (Batch 2023) under eight categories based on academic performance in the preceding year of their study and ranking/percentile in competitive exams like JEE,KCET,CAT, XAT,MAT along with achievements in sports, encouraging students from Northeast states of India, Tibetan diaspora, and wards of Ramaiah Group of Institutions alumni.

Mercury soars in K'taka, demand for power spikes

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

WITH the mercury soaring across Karnataka, the demand for electricity has also shot up. In April 2023, the peak power demand was 16,110 MW. But this year, the peak load touched 16,985 MW on April 5, with consumption touching 331.88 MU.

The peak load and consumption for April 2023 was 7,800 MW, which increased to 8,381 MW in April 2024, in BESCOM limits alone. Similarly, the peak consumption in April 2023 was 4,137.9 MW, which increased to 4,402.26 MW in April 2024.

An official from the energy department said, "The temperature rise has led to a rise in power demand, especially during the nights, with people using air conditioners. To meet the increased demand, all sources of energy are being utilised to the maximum capacity. All thermal stations are running, barring one unit in Raichur Thermal Power Station (RTPS), where the bunker had collapsed and is under repair. Solar power generation is also at its peak and is being fully used during the day." As of April 30 this year, seven units of RTPS are operational, generating 1,110 MW of the installed capacity, which is 1,720 MW. Three units of Ballari Thermal Power Station (BTPS) are generating 1,133 MW of the installed 1,700 MW. Three units of Yeramarus Thermal Power Station (YTPS) are operational, generating 977 MW of installed capacity of 1,600 MW. Hydel generation, however, has decreased.

The peak solar and wind power generation on April 29, 2024, was 6,562 MW, of which 6,236 MW was solar, according to records.

As per data, on April 30, 2024, the total state generation was 4,872 MW from the total installed capacity of 11,336.6 MW. Karnataka Power Corporation Limited Managing Director Pankaj Kumar Pandey said that the demand for power, especially during peak hours, has been divided. The demand for 1,550 MW of power from irrigation pump sets (IP sets) has been shifted from night hours to daytime, and it is being met with solar energy.

Also, as the consumption of power is rising, many consumers who were benefiting under the Gruha Jyothi scheme (a zero bill is generated if power consumption is less than 200 units) are now getting bills.

MYSTERY ON THE MOON

ISRO study confirms water ice possibility in Moon's polar craters

PURAN CHOUDHARY @ Bengaluru

THE Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), in another study, has enhanced the possibility of water ice in the polar craters of the Moon. Data revealed that the amount of subsurface ice in the first couple of metres is about 5 to 8 times larger than the one at the surface in both poles (North and South). This crucial information will aid drilling on the Moon to sample or excavate that ice on future missions, and the long-term presence of humans. Not only this, based on the depth of the water ice, it can help select future landing and sampling sites for Moon missions.

The study, on the 'Reachability and Genesis of Water Ice on the Moon' is being carried out by scientists of the Space Applications Centre (SAC) from ISRO, in collaboration with researchers at IIT Kanpur, University of Southern California, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and IIT (ISM) Dhanbad. It was published in the journal International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing.

The study also revealed that

the extent of water ice in the northern polar region is twice that in the southern polar region. Confirming the hypothesis made during the Chandrayaan mission in 2008, the primary source of subsurface water ice was suspected to be in the lunar poles. This result was found by utilizing polarimetric radar data from the Chandrayaan-2 Dual-frequency Synthetic Aperture Radar instrument.

Another interesting point made by the study is that water in the craters was "outgassed during volcanism in the Imbrian period". On the lunar geologic timescale, the Imbrian period was 3.85 to 3.80 billion years ago, during which intense volcanic activity took place. "The results also conclude that distribution of water ice is likely governed by Mare volcanism (intense bombarding by asteroid-sized bodies) and preferential impact cratering," noted ISRO's study.

The space agency said this will help with future in-situ volatile exploration plans on the Moon. The researchers used seven instruments, comprising a radar, laser, optical, neutron spectrometer, ultraviolet spectrometer, and thermal radiometer on board the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter to understand the origin and distribution of water ice on the Moon.

If any person related to the Congress had done what Prajwal has done today, then the same BJP would have created ruckus in the entire country. But today the BJP is not talking about this shameful issue because the JD(S) is their alliance partner
Ramalinga Reddy, State Transport Minister

In Phase 2, more women than men voted in state

Voting percentage of women stood at 69.65, against men's 69.48

HOW THEY CAST THEIR FRANCHISE

CONSTITUENCY	MALE	FEMALE	OTHERS	TOTAL %AGE
Bangalore Central	53.31	54.87	18.20	54.06
Bangalore North	53.52	55.45	18.54	54.45
Bangalore Rural	67.60	69.03	19.38	68.30
Bangalore South	52.24	54.17	12.50	53.17
Chamarajanagar	77.73	75.93	28.97	76.82
Chikkaballapur	77.92	76.11	30.83	77.00
Chitradurga	74.39	72.22	37.50	73.30
D Kannada	76.90	78.19	24.68	77.56
Hassan	77.97	77.39	23.26	77.68
Kolar	79.75	76.84	32.23	78.27
Mandya	82.24	81.12	26.19	81.67
Mysuru-Kodagu	71.38	69.90	20.65	70.62
Tumkur	79.35	76.80	25.68	78.05
Udupi- C'magalur	77.40	76.91	18.92	77.15

VOTING PERCENTAGE SHARED BY ECI

In Ph 3, 32,458 voters cast their franchise under home voting option

Bengaluru: Under Phase-3 of polling for Lok Sabha elections, a total of 32,458 people voted from home, which was 95.16% of the total list of 34,110 voters. This is less than the voter turnout for Phase-2 under the Vote From Home (VFH) option, where 46,810 (96.30%) voted, of the total 48,609 voters registered. As per data from the office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Karnataka, under Phase-3, 21,892 (94.31%) voters in the age group of 85 and above cast their votes at their home out of 23,213 voters approved under the option. Similarly, 10,566 (96.96%) people with disabilities (PwD) cast their votes at their home out of 10,897 voters approved.

BOSKY KHANNA @Bengaluru

MORE number of women than men voted in the second phase of Lok Sabha elections in the state that was held for 14 constituencies on April 26.

Though it is a marginal jump, psephologists and election officials say that the trend of increase in women voters has continued, showing that they are deciding for themselves and their family.

As per the latest statistics shared by the Election Commission of India, the male voting percentage was 69.48, while that of females 69.65. A total of 1,00,16,921 males voted as against 1,00,20,796 females, a difference of 3,875 voters.

Also, more women voted in all the four constituencies of Bangalore - North, Central, South and Rural -- and Dakshina Kannada.

During the 2019 polls, the male percentage was marginally higher than females. It was 69.55% for males and 67.65% for females. In 2014, the male to female voting percentage was 68.59 and 65.79, respectively.

Well-known political analyst Sandeep Shastry said the trend of inreasing women voters is an extension of their empowerment. He explained that women vote in a different way compared to men. Studies have shown that they are now not influenced by men, they have greater awareness and they are deciding for the welfare of themselves and their families. The empowerment of the girl child, improved education and increased awareness have led to a rise in women voter turnout. He also pointed out that in the last elections, the women turnout was more in seven states.

As per ECI data, in Phase-1 and Phase-2 of Lok Sabha polls, the states and union territories where larger number of women turned up to vote are: Assam, Jammu and Kashmir, Lakshwadeep, Manipur, Meghalaya, Puduherry, Nagaland, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Bihar, Kerala and Karnataka.

A senior election official said, "During our interaction with people on increasing voter awareness, we learnt that women were more keen to know details and vote as compared to men. Though the enrolment of men was more than women for Phase-2, the turnout of females was more. In Phase-3, the women voters are more than males. We will wait and see if the women turnout will he higher than men here too."

Safety, security of K'taka in danger: Shah

PRAMODKUMAR VAIDYA
@ Hubballi

Union Ministers Amit Shah and Pralhad Joshi and other BJP leaders wave at the crowd at a rally in Hubballi on Wednesday | D HEMANTH

UNION Home Minister Amit Shah ripped apart Congress for its appeasement politics and charged that its government in the state failed to act against those who raised pro-Pakistan slogans inside Vidhana Soudha and took the Rameshwaram Cafe blast lightly by terming it a cylinder blast, because of which the safety and security of the state is in danger.

Addressing a mammoth public rally here on Wednesday, Shah said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah did not hear anti-Pakistan slogans, but the entire country did. Also, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) took up the probe into the cafe blast and arrested anti-national elements responsible for the incident.

Hitting out at the Grand Old Party, he said that despite an invitation being extended for the consecration of Ramlalla at the newly built temple at Ayodhya, AICC president Mallikarjun Kharage, Congress senior leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi rejected it in fear of losing their vote bank. While Congress has always practised caste, dynastic and appeasement politics, BJP has opted for development politics to ensure inclusive progress across communities, he stated.

Seeking the people's support to make Narendra Modi prime minister for the third time, Shah said, "After you elected Modi the second time, within a few months he abrogated Article 370, which Congress did not touch as it was scared of annoying its vote bank. Rahul had opposed the abrogation, fearing a bloodbath on the streets of Kashmir. But nothing has happened in the last five years."

He ridiculed Kharge's remark that Karnataka has no relation to the abrogation of Article 370. As he asked the audience that did they concur with Modi's decision, he got a rousing reply of "Yes". "Then, shout back at Kharge by saying the people of Karnataka are ready to sacrifice their lives to protect Jammu and Kashmir," he exhorted the crowd.

Stating that the Modi government has zero tolerance for terrorism, he said that during the UPA tenure, terrorists were striking now and then, but the government's response was meek. But the BJP government conducted surgical and air strikes and developed the habit of 'Ghar Mein Ghus Ke Marna', killing terrorists on their own soil, he said.

Now, the choice is between those involved in Rs 12 lakh crore corruption and a person with no black spot in his 23-year career as chief minister and prime minister, between those who go on holidays frequently and the man who works tirelessly without taking leave even to celebrate Deepavali, between those who took the support of SDPI and those who banned PFI, he said.

5 GUARANTEES WILL HELP CONGRESS WIN ALL SEATS IN KARNATAKA: MUNIYAPPA

Kolar: Karnataka Food and Civil Supplies Minister KH Muniyappa said on Wednesday that the Congress State Government's five guarantees and other development works will help the party win all 28 Lok Sabha seats in the state. Speaking to TNIE before commencing his campaign in Kalaburagi, Muniyappa said all five guarantees promised by the Congress in its manifesto ahead of the 2023 Assembly elections have been fulfilled. "The needy have benefited. I am confident of the Congress winning all the seats in the state," the veteran Congress leader said. Muniyappa said he has data to show that 4.5 crore people in Karnataka have benefited from the Anna Bhagya scheme. "The government is supplying 5kg of rice as well as Rs 170 cash per person for the remaining 5kg of rice under Anna Bhagya. Our Yuvanidhi scheme is also helping the unemployed youth. The Congress government is keen on people's welfare. All this will help us win all 28 seats in the state," he added. He further said that the JDS-BJP alliance in the state is fearing defeat. On drought relief compensation released by the Centre, the former Union Minister said that the Centre was meting out step-motherly treatment towards Karnataka.

CONG CANDIDATE ALGUR PREPARES 10-POINT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR VIJAYAPURA

Vijayapura: Congress candidate from Vijayapura constituency Raju Algur announced that he has prepared a 10-point programme for the development of the district if he gets elected as the MP. Addressing press persons on Wednesday, he highlighted that he has identified ten points regarding the various developments required in the district, such as irrigation, railway connectivity, horticulture, airport, etc. Noting that the irrigation projects under Upper Krishna Project (UKP) have been undone in North Karnataka district for decades, Algur criticised the central government for not issuing gazette notification in this regard. "I will fight to get the gazette notification issued, and attain National Project status," he asserted. Referring to poor railway connectivity from Vijayapura to Bengaluru, Mumbai and Hyderabad, he promised to get more trains and reduce travel time to these places to eight hours. With regard to improving the educational sector, he said that he would also try to bring premier institutes such as IIT and IIM.

'Our guarantees, nyays Brahmastra to defeat BJP'

RAMAKRISHNA BADSESHI
@ Kalaburagi

AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge has said that the five guarantees of the Karnataka government and the five nyays and 25 guarantees promised by the Congress at the all-India level will be the 'Brahmastra' to defeat the BJP in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections. Addressing an election meeting at Jewargi in Kalaburagi district, Kharge said that the Congress manifesto has frustrated Prime Minister Narendra Modi as it has assured the people of the country "everything possible for the country's prosperity."

"Because of this, Modi has started abusing me, Sonia Gandhi, and Rahul Gandhi. He has started giving assurances that are not possible to implement. He has failed to implement the assurances given in 2014 and 2019. At that time, he had assured to provide Rs 15 lakh to every citizen from the black money deposited allegedly by Congress leaders, double farmers' income, and generate 2 crore jobs annually. Modi has proved that 'Modi is a Sullina Saradar'," Kharge alleged.He claimed that it was the late Dharman Singh and himself of the Congress who were instrumental in amending Article 371J of the Constitution, which provided special status to districts in North Karnataka.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah alleged that the Modi government has done injustice to Karnataka by delaying the announcement of drought relief compensation. "We have to approach the Supreme Court to get drought relief compensation. Now, the Centre has released a meager amount as compensation. Karnataka has brought it to the notice of the apex court," the CM said. Siddaramaiah said that Modi is causing hatred among different castes and communities by making false allegations against the Congress.

I.N.D.I.A ahead of NDA after first two phases of polls: Kharge

Kalaburagi: AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge said on Wednesday that the Congress and its allies in the I.N.D.I.A bloc is ahead of the BJP and NDA after the first two phases of the Lok Sabha elections. "We are ahead in the first two phases. People themselves are coming forward to support us. Earlier, we used to call and convince them (to support us). But this time, they are responding on their own... it's like an undercurrent. There are people who are ready to help us but are not ready to show up. They are invisible. So, this time we will be able to prevent Narendra Modi from returning to power," Kharge told TNIE. On Congress candidates in Surat and Indore withdrawing from the polls, Kharge said, "Such black sheep will be there everywhere. It is unfortunate that we gave tickets to such people who don't have ideological commitment. Those who are committed to the cause of saving democracy will not leave Congress," he said. Kharge refused to respond to Union Minister Pralhad Joshi's allegation that he was blackmailing the voters as he turned emotional while campaigning for his son-in-law, Radhakrishna Doddamani, in Kalaburagi. "I don't consider Joshi a leader. He is a puppet of Modi and Amit Shah. I only reply to Modi," Kharge said.

Poll code violation: EC notice to MLA

ENS @ Belagavi

THE Assistant Returning Officer of Kagwad has issued notice to Kagwad Congress MLA Raju Kage for violating the model code of conduct, and ordered him to respond within 24 hours.

He was charged with commenting on the personal matter of another individual during his election campaign. Kage had reportedly spoken lightly of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and slammed the PM's young supporters for chanting his name. He asked them whether there was nobody else fit to become PM, if the latter was no more. Kage had expressed anger over the continued chants of Modi's followers while he was addressing a Congress rally at Madanbhavi village, in his constituency near Belagavi. He also reportedly threatened voters of Jugul and Mangavati villages with power cuts if they did not give his party a substantial lead.

Taking to X, the BJP Karnataka unit lambasted Kage for speaking about Modi, and said he had become prime minister with the blessings of 140 crore people of the country. Posting video footage of Kage's speech, the party said, "Kagwad MLA Raju Kage has let his boneless tongue loose again. If the cowards do not have issues to raise, they await Narendra Modi's death."

Despite his claims that crores of jobs would be created for the youth, Kage said the PM failed to keep his promises and lakhs of graduates in the country are jobless today. "When the youth asked the PM to create jobs for them, he told them to sell pakodas," he added. Kage had stated that he was also a graduate and capable of leading the country effectively (as PM of India). He said many voters want a Congress government in the state but need Modi when it came to the LS polls.

FACE-OFF

It's late S Bangarappa versus BS Yediyurappa family in the Shivamogga constituency this Lok Sabha election too. Congress candidate Geetha Shivarajkumar, defeated in the 2014 general election, is once again trying her luck against three-time MP BY Raghavendra of BJP. Excerpts from interviews with **Assistant Editor Marx Tejaswi...**

'Guarantees will contribute to my victory'

How is the campaign going?
The campaigning is progressing well, and the response is positive. People are showing considerable affection, and I have not received any negative feedback. Women and younger crowds, including first and second-time voters, are turning out to my meetings in large numbers. The absence of my late father, Bangarappa, is keenly felt by everyone.

Do you believe people gathering for address by actors will translate into votes?
It is likely to translate into votes, unlike my previous experience in the 2014 LS election. Campaigning by actors is expected to help me.

You were defeated in 2014 by former CM BS Yediyurappa and your brother Madhu Bangarappa by BJP's Raghavendra in the 2018 by-election and 2019 general election...
I believe Raghavendra's winning streak will come to an end this time.

What issues would you prioritise once elected as MP?
Numerous issues are being addressed by my brother and local MLAs. My primary focus will be on tackling drinking water scarcity. I've heard of young children being sent to relatives' homes or hostels to study due to lack of regular bus connectivity from their native places. This issue, along with road improvement initiatives, will be addressed. Efforts will also be made to install mobile towers in remote areas and address significant concerns such as issuing title deeds to eligible individuals. I intend to address a range of issues, in collaboration with my brother, and other MLAs.

Will Congress guarantees help you?
I am confident that the guarantees will significantly contribute to my victory. The guarantees have reached 98% of the population, with the remaining 2% of eligible people experiencing technical difficulties. Beneficiaries are likely to cast their votes in my favour. The party is garnering support thanks to the schemes.

There is an allegation that once you win, you will become inaccessible to the people and return to Bengaluru. How do you respond to this accusation?
I have residences in both Kubatur and Shivamogga city. Instead of propagating unfounded allegations, BJP leaders should exhibit maturity. BJP should speak about addressing farmers' issues and the plight of the underprivileged. I assure you that I will remain present and accessible to the people. I have never shied away from my responsibilities, as evidenced by my regular visits to the Shakti Dhama orphanage twice a week, as needed.

I am confident that the guarantees will significantly contribute to my victory. The guarantees have reached 98% of the population, with the remaining 2% of eligible people experiencing technical difficulties.
Geetha Shivarajkumar

Under the Yuva Nidhi scheme, Congress promised a stipend for all graduates and diploma holders. Now, it is saying stipends will be given only to those who passed in 2022-23
BY Raghavendra

'Modi's rally has motivated party workers'

How is the campaign progressing?
The campaigning is going on well and the atmosphere is in my favour. PM Narendra Modi's campaigning a month ago has motivated the party workers.

What issues have constituents raised?
Many individuals are still awaiting title deeds for their homes. I perceive it as my duty to ensure justice for forest dwellers under the Forest Rights Act, facilitate the permanent rehabilitation of Sharavathi Project evacuees and address issues concerning deemed forests, among others. While some of these matters may be resolved at the central level, others may present challenges. Nonetheless, my commitment remains steadfast.

Actors are endorsing Congress candidate Geetha Shivarajkumar. Do you believe Geetha has an edge?
While I hold immense respect for artists, I believe the impact of actors campaigning may not necessarily translate into votes. The public perception of actors differs from practical issues. For me, the true heroes are my constituents.

Do you view Congress' guarantees as potentially hindering your victory?
Congress promised 10 kg of rice during the Assembly elections. It is the Modi government which is giving 5 kg of rice to the people. Under the Yuva Nidhi scheme, Congress promised a stipend for all graduates and diploma holders. Now, it is saying stipends will be given only to those who passed in 2022-23. When there are lakhs of unemployed youth, only a few are given stipends. Stamp duty has been hiked. Congress is promising Rs 1 lakh per year to all poor women. Even if 32 crore poor women are eligible, the government needs Rs 32 lakh crore. But, our country's budget is Rs 45 lakh crore. How will they bring money for development, defence, salary etc,.?

There is a fear of closure of VISL steel plant...
The government has divested loss-making PSUs. But I have not let go of VISL and will not in the future as well. Adequate funds will be brought to revive the plant. But, the Congress hit the last nail on the MPM. I will also try to revive it.

What development plans are needed in the constituency?
I will try to bring national-level education institutions. Many youth have rented rooms in Shivamogga city and are doing work from home as there is no internet connectivity at their hometowns. If we install more mobile towers, youth will work from there. Plans are on to set up a Sainik School on 100 acres of land in Thirthahalli, ensuring access to quality education and opportunities for local youth.

We all wanted the INDIA bloc to happen in Bengal. But Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury prevented it to strengthen the hands of the BJP

Abhishek Banerjee, TMC general secretary

BJP, CONG BANK ON DEFECTORS

ANURAAG SINGH @Bhopal

AS the Lok Sabha polls move into the third phase in Madhya Pradesh, the spotlight will be on the Gwalior-Chambal region — the most fiercely contested region in the 2023 assembly polls, where BJP won 18 and Congress finished a close second with 16 seats.

While the region houses four seats — Guna, Gwalior, Bhind-SC and Morena — the last one, Morena, seems to be emerging as the hottest and toughest.

Spread across eight assembly segments in Morena and Sheopur districts bordering Rajasthan, Morena is famous for being the land of the sweet Gajak (sweet prepared with sesame and jaggery), the expanding Banmore Industrial Area, and the Kuno National Park (KNP), which is home to African cheetahs since September 2022.

The constituency, which houses around 20.04 lakh voters (10.70 lakh males, 9.34 lakh females and 24 third gender), has turned into a BJP citadel since 1996, with former Morena mayor Ashok Argal, infamous for being allegedly involved in the 2008 cash-for-votes scandal, winning the seat four times in a row between 1996 and 2004.

With the BSP too being a formidable player, the contest this time in Morena appears to be three-cornered, but as per political observers, the battle may ultimately boil down to the BJP and Congress. The BSP may largely play a spoiler for either of the two main parties.

Aiming to snatch the seat from the BJP, the Congress has fielded Satyapal Singh Neetu Sikarwar, the son of a BJP leader. The younger son of BJP veteran and two-time former BJP MLA from Morena Lok Sabha seat's Sumaoli assembly segment Gajraj Singh Sikarwar, the Congress candidate had won the seat in 2013 assembly polls on BJP ticket.

Neetu's elder brother Satish Sikawar, also a former BJP man who defected to the Congress in 2020, is the first-time Congress MLA from Gwalior-East seat, while Satish's wife Shobha Sikarwar is currently Congress' Gwalior mayor.

Though Neetu was declared the Congress candidate from Morena after a long delay and only around a month before the May 7 poll battle, the party's best bet is his family's major influence not just among the Kshatriya community he hails from, but also other castes including Brahmins, Kushwahas and SCs.

Gajraj Singh Sikarwar, who is known among Kshatriyas as Dada (elder brother), now remains confined to a wheelchair due to severe paralytic attack. But despite this, the former BJP veteran has issued a pamphlet appeal to voters (particularly eyeing the 2 lakh plus Kshatriya voters) for his son's poll success.

On the other hand, the BJP nominee Shiv Mangal Singh Tomar is an ex-MLA from Dimani assembly segment, currently represented by his mentor and Vidhan Sabha Speaker Narendra Singh Tomar. Shiv Mangal Tomar won from Dimani on the BJP ticket in 2008 by just 256 votes, but lost by bigger margins from the same assembly seat in 2013 and 2018.

With the second-time MP and former Union minister Narendra Singh Tomar — who won the Morena seat in 2009 and 2018 — now being the state's Vidhan Sabha speaker, BJP has fielded Shiv Mangal Tomar, who is being largely seen as the former Union minister's shadow candidate to maintain his clout in the region's politics.

"Narendra Singh Tomar and Dada Gajraj Singh Sikarwar are considered two major Kshatriya politicians in Morena. It is an open secret in local BJP circles that Tomar was instrumental in Dada's elder son Satish's defeat in 2018 assembly polls in Gwalior-East, when Satish contested as BJP candidate. Tomar's hand is also alleged in the defeats of other BJP leaders, including former Madhya Pradesh ministers Jaibhan Singh Pavaiya and Anoop Mishra in Gwalior district in 2013 and 2018 assembly polls. With a major section of BJP in Gwalior-Chambal region, particularly in Morena, being averse to Tomar, the possibility of some BJP quarters internally backing the Congress candidate in the May 7 polls cannot be ruled out," a BJP leader in Morena, who wished not to be named, told this newspaper.

While the Congress is eyeing the seat it had last won in 1991 through a BJP family scion, the BJP too is working on a counter plan of banking on desertions from other parties.

The list of major politicians from the region who have joined the BJP in this poll season include six-time MLA and former minister Ramniwas Rawat (a powerful OBC leader who missed out the Congress ticket despite having finished runners up from the seat in 2019 and 2009), Morena mayor Sharda Solanki, former Congress MLAs Rakesh Mawai and Ajab Singh Kushwah (all from Congress), besides BSP's ex-Brahmin MLA Balveer Dandotiya, who lost to Narendra Singh Tomar in 2023 assembly polls.

"There is no other issue except caste in the politics of Gwalior-Chambal region, particularly Morena. Even the dacoits who once called the shots in the Chambal ravines of Bhind and Morena largely headed the gangs on caste lines. By roping in these former Congress and BSP leaders in its ranks, the BJP is eyeing to cut into Congress and BSP votes in various dominant castes, including Gurjars, Brahmins, Kushwah, Rawat (Meena) and Scheduled Castes. But the ruling party also risks the possibility of other castes and its own cadres averse to these leaders since long, actually working against the party's candidate on the poll day," Morena-based political analyst Hariom Gaur said.

A caste-wise break-up of the 20.04 lakh voters in Morena constituency reveals that the Scheduled Castes form the largest chunk with around 4 lakh plus votes, Kshatriyas (2.75 lakh), the OBCs including Gurjars, Rawats and Kushwahas collectively around 4-5 lakh, Brahmins who are around 2.5 lakh and the Baniyas around one lakh.

With the BSP fielding Ramesh Chand Garg for the May 7 battle, the Congress hopes to profit from the possibility of the BSP candidate eating into BJP's traditional voter base.

NEETU SATYAPAL SINGH SIKARWAR (INC)

SHIVMANGAL SINGH TOMAR (BJP)

RAMESH GARG (BSP)

KEY CONTESTANTS

TOTAL VOTERS 20.04 LAKH | MALE 10.70 LAKH | FEMALE 9.34 LAKH | 3RD GENDER: 24

2023 ASSEMBLY ELECTION RESULTS

Out of the eight assembly segments,

INC	BJP
05	03

CASTE BREAK-UP

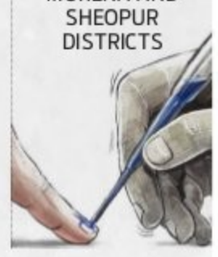
Scheduled caste	4 lakh+
Kshatriyas	2.75 lakh
OBCs (Gurjars, Rawat and Kushwahas)	4-5 lakh
Brahmins	2.5 lakh
Baniyas	1 lakh

2019 LS ELECTION RESULTS

Narendra Singh Tomar (BJP) defeated Congress' Ramniwas Rawat by 1.13 lakh votes

61.96% was the total voter turnout
47.63% won by BJP
37.66% won by Congress
11.38% won by BSP

2,361 POLLING STATIONS SPREAD ACROSS 8 ASSEMBLY SEGMENTS IN MORENA AND SHEOPUR DISTRICTS



PREVIOUS WINNERS

- Ashok Argal (BJP) won four times between 1996 and 2004,
- Atal Bihari Vajpayee's nephew and ex-MP minister Anoop Mishra won in 2014
- Out of the 17 elections & bypolls held since 1952, the BJP (or Jana Sangh) has won the seat 9 times, Congress 6, and Janata Party once
- Former Union minister and current Vidhan Sabha Speaker Narendra Singh Tomar won in 2009 and 2019

GUJARAT

Modi vows to make India world's 3rd largest economy

PM Narendra Modi at a public meeting at Banaskantha in Gujarat on Wednesday | PTI

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA @Ahmedabad

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi, on an election campaign in the home state Gujarat, addressed a public meeting at the Deesa town in Banaskantha district, where he appealed to the people of Gujarat to vote for a stable government. "On the voting day (May 7) even if the mercury is at its peak, you should vote without fail," he said.

He predicted that the Congress would lose all 25 seats in Rajasthan, voting for which concluded in the second phase. "The Congress is busy defaming me and running a malicious campaign in the name of 'Chailwala' or 'Chowkidar Chor hai' or by mocking my government's decision to buy Rafale fighters," said the PM.

Modi also promised to make India the third largest economy in the world in his next term.

With a public meeting in Deesa, and another at Himmatnagar, Modi is targeting voters of four constituencies in North Gujarat, Sabarkantha, Mehsana, Banaskantha and Patan. The PM said the Congress wanted to give a religion-based reservation, and challenged the party and its INDIA bloc allies to give a written guarantee that they will never do so and also not tinker with the existing quota for SCs/ STs/OBCs.

Targeting the Congress, he said, "Your intention is to give reservation to Muslims in the name of religion."

"I challenge the 'shehzada' (prince) of the Congress (referring to Rahul Gandhi), as well as his party and its supporters to announce they will never misuse reservation in the name of religion, nor will they play with the Constitution or grant reservation in the name of religion," said the PM.

"Let the Congress and INDIA bloc give a guarantee in writing -- because they cannot be trusted -- that they will never give reservation in the name of religion. They should also give a second guarantee that they will never touch reservation given to SCs/STs/OBCs and (poor) in the general category. They will never do so...will never give it in writing," he noted.

The Congress and INDIA bloc have come out with a lie, and are flashing copies of the Constitution (at poll rallies) to spread fear that the statute book will be changed and reservation given to SCs/STs /OBCs and EWS will be scrapped if the BJP-led NDA retains power, he said. This is nothing, but a "completely fabricated gossip," the PM told the rally.

"The Congress and its people should listen carefully that this is Modi. As long as Modi is alive, I will not let you play the game of reservation in the name of the Constitution," he said.

On Thursday, Modi will address four public rallies in Gujarat's Anand, Surendranagar, Junagadh, and Jamnagar. With these four public rallies, he will be covering central Gujarat's four seats and seven in the Saurashtra region.

'Gujarat helped me get experience in governance'

On the 65th foundation day of Gujarat, Modi appealed to Gujaratis to pledge to make it a developed state. "I thank you all for giving me an opportunity to serve the state as CM, which helped me gain experience in governance," he said. "As CM you have trained and groomed me," Modi said. "In the third term as PM of India, I will ensure that India becomes the world's third biggest economy."

POONAM MAADAM

Kshatriyas up ante, protest against BJP Jamnagar nominee

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA @Ahmedabad

THE BJP's Jamnagar candidate **Poonam Maadam** encountered resistance from members of Gujarat's Rajput community, which is angry over the party's Rajkot candidate Parshottam Rupala's comments.

Rupala, attending a Dalit event on March 22 this year, had said that "the erstwhile 'Maharajas' broke bread with the British and also married off their daughters to them", invited the ire of the Kshatriya community. The Saurashtra region of Gujarat had been on the boil ever since, with Rajput community demanding an apology from Rupala.

During a campaign in the city on Monday night, BJP's Jamnagar candidate Poonam Maadam too encountered protests from youths brandishing black flags.

When stopped, Maadam shouted at the mob, saying, "Enough, now stop the protest and agitation." The police on duty detained some Kshatriya youths, but released later.

Kishorsinh Jadeja, a Kshatriya youth, told media that Rajputs are not only angry with Rupala. "We are angry with the party too. Our demand was very simple, to withdraw Rupala from the fray. But the ruling party did not agree."

Campaigning had become difficult for Maadam. Party sources said she could not address a small gathering just 100 metres away from her residence in Jamnagar.

MAHARASHTRA

Mahayuti seat-sharing deal — BJP 28, Shinde 14, Ajit Pawar 5

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @Mumbai

AFTER two phases of Lok Sabha polls and a lot of back-and-forth, the ruling Mahayuti in Maharashtra announced the seat-sharing for Lok Sabha polls on Wednesday. The BJP will contest 28 seats, while CM Ekanth Shinde-led Shiv Sena 14 and NCP five. The RSP will field candidate on one seat.

The Shiv Sena announced its remaining candidates for Thane, Kalyan and Nashik seats on Wednesday. Initially, BJP was not ready to concede the South Mumbai, Thane, Mumbai North West, and Nashik seats to CM Ekanth Shinde-led Shiv Sena. However, it conceded all these seats.

A party source said the BJP had planned to offer only 12 seats to Shiv Sena, but its survey on these seats made it realize that all these were tough ones to win against Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT).

"The BJP decided that rather than contesting the 'losing seats', it should to offer them to Shiv Sena," said a party source. This deal will help the BJP in apportioning blame on Shinde if his faction fails to win the promised number of seats," said a party leader.

A Shiv Sena leader claimed that in negotiations with the BJP, CM Shinde showed his political shrewdness and brought the 14 Lok Sabha seats for his faction. "On the other hand, deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar, a partner of Mahayuti, also has an equal number of MLAs in this government, but he got only five seats. Therefore, Shiv Sena is in a better position today in Mahayuti," said the Sena leader.

In 2019, the BJP contested 25 seats. This election, it is contesting 28. "The party feels that by contesting as many seats, it can at least repeat the previous winning number, 22 seats. This is a very close contest, therefore, BJP is putting its all efforts into the polls," said an observer.

Rather than contesting losing seats BJP gave them to Shiv Sena so that they can claim they gave honourable numbers of seats to Sena and if Sena loses, they can be blamed

Sources

Nomination

The Shiv Sena led by Eknath Shinde on Wednesday named ex-mayor Naresh Mhaske and MP Hemant Godse for Thane and Nashik LS seats. The party also declared the candidature of CM Shinde's son and MP Shrikant Shinde from Kalyan seat.

ELECTION2024

Shyam Rangeela decides to contest poll from Varanasi

Shyam Rangeela, famed for his mimicry of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has declared his candidacy for the Varanasi Lok Sabha seat in Uttar Pradesh, setting the stage for a direct challenge. Making the announcement on microblogging site X earlier this week, he cited uncertainty regarding candidate nominations as his motivation, a move initially perceived by many as satire. However, he confirmed to media on Wednesday his plan to arrive in Varanasi to file nomination by the weekend.

Sanjay Nirupam returns to Shinde's Sena

Sanjay Nirupam, former general secretary of Maharashtra Congress who was expelled for "indiscipline and anti-party statements", will return to Shiv Sena after 19 years. Nirupam was Shiv Sena's Rajya Sabha MP before he joined the Congress in 2005. "He will soon join the Shiv Sena," Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde told media on Wednesday.

Ex-Bihar Speaker RJD nominee from Siwan

Former Bihar assembly Speaker Awadh Bihari Chaudhary has entered the fray on a RJD ticket from Siwan, the lone Lok Sabha seat where the party did not formally announce its candidate. Choudhary, who has been a multiple-term MLA from Siwan, filed his nomination papers on Tuesday in the presence of RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav. Hina Shahab, the widow of multiple-term former MP Mohd Shahabuddin has also filed her nomination as an Independent.

ANANTNAG-RAJOURI

Migration on: Gujjars, Bakerwals rue poll delay

FAYAZ WANI @Srinagar

THE Gujjar and Bakerwal community is disappointed over the deferment of polls to Anantnag-Rajouri seat, saying the move will lead to drop in voter turnout due to the annual migration of nomadic groups.

The EC has deferred the polls in the constituency in view of inclement weather. The polling, earlier scheduled to be held in the third phase on May 7, will now be held in the sixth phase on May 25.

"The EC decision to defer polls for Anantnag LS seat is very unfortunate. Now over one lakh nomads of border districts of Poonch and Rajouri will start their annual migration with livestock to high-altitude pastures, so they will voting. It will impact the poll percentage," said Anwar Choudhary, convener of All J&K Gujjar Bakerwal Organisations Coordination Committee.

He said annual migration of nomads starts by the end of April. "We had urged the nomadic population to defer migration till after the polls on May 7. Now with EC deferring polls till May 25, one lakh nomads will start their annual migration," Choudhary said.

Gujjar youth leader Guftar Ahmed Choudhary said, "People's trust in EC has taken a beating. EC should have considered annual migration of Gujjar community while taking the decision."

The main contest will be between PDP's Mehbooba Mufti, NC's Mian Altaf and Apni Party's Zafar Iqbal Manhas, who is backed by BJP.

While BJP, Apni Party, Peoples Conference and Azad's DPAP welcomed the decision to defer polls, NC and PDP strongly opposed the move. PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti said authorities deliberately delayed elections to manipulate voters in favour of the BJP ally. "There seems to be collusion at play between the officials and EC to manipulate the electoral process."

NC vice president Omar Abdullah said deferment of polls is meant to deprive nomadic communities of the right to vote. "The decision was taken on pleas of those who are not contesting polls there. We are hopeful that those who hatched conspiracy to defer polls will be dusted on polling day," he said.

EDITORIAL

"Libraries aren't in the real world. They're sanctuaries of pure thought. In this way, I can go on living on the moon for the rest of my life" — Paul Auster

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.
— Ramnath Goenka

PRAJWAL REVANNA CASE: OF POLITICAL SENSE AND GENDER INSENSIBILITY

THE alleged sex scandal in which Hassan's 33-year-old parliamentarian Prajwal Revanna and his father, former minister and Holenarasipura MLA H D Revanna, both JDS leaders, are accused has not only become a major political issue, but it has again brought to light the systemic rot in societal attitude towards women. Although the Karnataka government has constituted a special investigative team to verify the facts, the issue throws up several political and ethical questions.

The timing of the publication of these videos, numbering about 3,000, smacks of a political conspiracy. The impact could be felt by the BJP, which is in alliance with the JDS. By the time the videos went viral and became a subject of conversation across India and abroad, the JDS had already contested its allotted three of the 14 Lok Sabha seats in the second phase of voting on April 26—Hassan (from where Prajwal contested), Mandya and Kolar. In the rest of the 14 Lok Sabha seats that will go to the polls on May 7, the BJP is in direct contest with the Congress. The BJP has already come under fire over the scandal, not just from the Congress but from civil society as well. Questions are being raised on the apparent silence maintained by BJP's central and state leadership. The BJP and the Congress are now trading accusations. While Congress leaders including Rahul Gandhi questioned how Prajwal was allowed to leave India on April 27 despite the videos making the rounds, Union Home Minister Amit Shah countered why the Congress-ruled Karnataka government failed to act despite knowing about the case.

The larger question is about punishing the guilty, not the victims, and the vulnerability of women who are a robust voter base for both the Congress and the BJP in the state. The probe needs to focus on the insensitive manner in which the videos were circulated without blurring the faces of the victims and the people who were responsible for their circulation. The case shows how women so easily become objects of sexual exploitation by men in power. Equally disgusting is political parties using the victims as tools to gain advantage over each other. Whichever way the investigation unfolds, the case must be a loud knock on the door of Indian sensibilities towards women.

ENSURE POWER SUPPLY AT ALL POLLING STATIONS

AS the world's largest electoral juggernaut moves into the third phase amid an alarming heat wave, power outages have become commonplace across the country. Rising temperatures may have kept a section of voters from exercising their democratic right, but the attendant spike in power demand has raised some other difficult questions. India's electricity consumption is estimated to have surged 11 percent to 144 billion units in April, putting a heavy load on the distribution grid. And it is likely to go through the roof in May.

Political accountability is on everyone's mind at election time. Power distribution being a state subject, state governments are trying their best to avoid disruptions for the fear of a backlash. But in doing so, the states are staring at huge losses as they are forced to buy power at exorbitant rates to match the demand. In some regions where the voting has ended, power outages have become a regular nuisance. The utilities blame it on the unexpected rise in demand and cite two obvious reasons—more air-conditioners and industrial growth. In Tamil Nadu, for instance, the demand is on a steady rise, setting a new record of 454 million units on April 30.

On the electoral front, despite a diktat from the Election Commission, there are reports of supply disruption at some polling stations as well as strong rooms designated for storing election equipment. According to the commission's guidelines, the state-owned power utilities are supposed to ensure continuous supply at all polling stations and strong rooms where the electronic voting machines would be stored until June 4. The disruptions interrupted camera surveillance at places, which in turn led to protests from political parties over a potential breach of security. This should be avoided at any cost.

Power generation, which dropped sharply during the pandemic and subsequently reported a steady increase, needs to be pushed up through amiable policies. With a water crisis looming large, several hydel power projects have been performing below par. It is expected that the demand would spurt every year with the growing population and industrialisation. The existing infrastructure—including transformers, lines and poles—needs to be strengthened so that it can manage the overload. A delay in reinforcing the infrastructure will not only impact the people at large, but also cripple India's economic growth.

QUICK TAKE

NOT ONLY ON CAMPUS

STUDENTS and teachers on more than 40 US college campuses are protesting Israel's war in Gaza and the US's response to it. Nearly 300 were arrested in Columbia and City University, two New York campuses that host a number of South Asian students. Given that this is the US, which boasts of a history of campus protests, the strong-armed police response has shocked parents around the world. Students have encamped and blocked others on various other occasions, too. Lyndon Johnson's presidency withered when anti-Vietnam-war protests rocked colleges in the 1960s. If this becomes such a moment for Joe Biden, the world will face four more years of policy mayhem.

THE latest cycle of ethnic strife between the Meiteis and Kuki-Zos in Manipur will be a year old this May 3. The violence has already claimed more than 200 lives and displaced more than 60,000 people, yet there is no sign of a conclusion. Sporadic exchanges of gunfire at the foothills continue between armed volunteers, at times adding to the toll. The state government is seemingly as clueless as ever; the Centre too still does not seem to see the matter as being urgent enough to step in and use its might to bring the situation back into the hands of the law.

The reality is that there has been ethnic cleansing on both sides. There are no Kuki-Zo tribes left in the central Imphal valley, and similarly, there are no Meiteis left in the townships of the Kuki-Zo-dominated foothills. The mountains beyond the foothills are where the Nagas are. Other than these broad categories of ethnicities and their geographical locations, there are also several other communities domiciled in the state, and all are adversely affected by the conflict.

The Imphal valley is under the modern land revenue law introduced in 1960, when Manipur was still a Union territory. It is open to settlement by every Indian and therefore always had a mixed population, though dominated by its original inhabitants, the Meiteis. The hills were left outside the purview of modern land laws and generally considered exclusive to its hillmen inhabitants, though no law explicitly spells this out.

The number of Kuki-Zo people displaced as well as property losses among them is greater than the Meiteis displaced from foothill townships. The death toll, too, is about three to two, with Kuki-Zos taking more casualties, especially in the initial days of the bloody feud. There are also hundreds of villages along the foothills belonging to both communities, and many are today wrecked and barren.

These numbers aside, the crimes in the mindless explosion of communal frenzy and consequent human tragedies visited on either side remain indistinguishable. If what has happened is unthinkable, what is still happening is equally dreadful and must be addressed urgently. This has to do with the darkness 60,000 and more souls forced to flee and take shelter in numerous community-run relief camps would be staring at every time they imagine a future for themselves and their children.

The mood has changed among the tens of thousands of displaced Manipuris. From anger and melancholia, they have turned to utter despair. Therein lies a Freudian warning

MANIPUR'S LOST YEAR SHOWS NO SIGN OF ENDING

PRADIP PHANJOUBAM

Editor, *Imphal Review of Arts and Politics*

SOURAV ROY

Those who have been visiting at least some of these camps periodically would know, and it should also not be difficult even for those who have not seen any of them to imagine, that there has been a gradual mood change within these shelters in the months gone by. In the initial weeks, it was anger and outrage towards those who destroyed their homes and made them flee, and at the government for allowing this to happen. In the months that followed, as the harsh reality began sinking in, the predominant longing was for a return of peace and normalcy so they could return home and rebuild their lives. Today, a year on, with nothing much improving, the atmosphere in these camps is increasingly tinged with despair.

Health workers who have been making consultative visits to these camps are already noticing signs of mental health deterioration. As hope for the future gets thinner and dimmer, depression in varying degrees is already showing up, and they fear more severe manifestations of mental health issues in the near future, including suicidal tendencies and violently deviant behaviours amongst their youth. If unheeded and unchecked, these conditions could reach epidemic proportions, they fear.

The continuance of the conflict and the absence of the strong arms of the law has also ensured the emergence of several armed civil militias, mostly of young men, taking on the responsibility of defending their villages and communities. Without realising it, they are completely changing the course of their own lives. When they should ideally have been pursuing their studies or careers, they are now compelled to wield weapons to fight and kill.

This is the immense human catastrophe Manipur is having to live with, and generally out of sight of the rest of the nation, except for grossly skewed pictures sketched and spread by ambulance-sniffing hordes of moralists far away, jumping to conclusions that suit their religious and ideological affiliations.

The first and foremost requirement for the return of peace is for the state—either the provincial state of Manipur or the Indian state, if the former is incapable—to step in and take control. In the spirit Max Weber underscored, the state must hold monopoly over legitimate violence and everybody other than the law-keeping organs of the state must be disarmed. Only then can dialogue between the civil population begin meaningfully to put to rest whatever misunderstandings there were that caused the conflict in the first place.

But even after peace is won, for many, it is not going to be easy to reconcile with the new reality. All losses can be compensated or rebuilt, but not the loss of loved ones. Sigmund Freud's essay Mourning and Melancholia may have some lessons. Mourning is about the living bidding goodbye to the dead, but in Freud's melancholia, the distinction between the living and dead worlds collapses and the living gets trapped in the agony of loss. The sense of victimhood that comes along also acquires a perverse legitimacy and gratification, thereby perpetuating this condition further.

There have been several cinematic explorations of this Freudian theory. Alfred Hitchcock's *Marnie* is one. But Christopher Nolan's *Inception* is more illustrative. In this science fiction, a husband is burdened with guilt that he may have induced his wife's suicide, and comes to be haunted by her. The man gets to travel into his own unconscious mind several layers deep even at the risk of not waking up again, and confronts his wife there. He confesses to her his faults in her suicide and that he loves her and will never forsake her memory, but now that she is dead and he is living, he must move on, and does so to find peace. Agonising as it may be, the living must have to bid farewell to the dead and move on in life.

(Views are personal)
(phanjoubam@gmail.com)

WRITERS SURVIVING FATWAS: RUSHDIE ON KNIFE'S EDGE

KAJAL BASU

Veteran journalist

YOU would never guess it, but there were at least seven attempts on the life of Salman Rushdie. Only one of them, having brought him to the brink of death, has been written about.

The chronology of Rushdie's flight from fatwa is interesting. *The Satanic Verses* was published in 1988. Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini passed the death fatwa against him in 1989. Rushdie called it his "unfunny Valentine" because it was issued on February 14. On February 18, Rushdie apologised for the "distress the publication has occasioned to the sincere followers of Islam". On the 19th, Khomeini's office rejected the apology and ordered "every Muslim… to send him to hell".

Rushdie went into hiding for 10 long years, peripatetic and sandbagged by a protective police contingent. In 1998, under the reformist President Mohammad Khatami, the Iranian government promised to not enforce the fatwa nor rescind it—in genuflection to the technicality that a fatwa can only be withdrawn by the person who issued it, and Khomeini having died four months after issuing it. Upon his re-emergence that year, Rushdie embarked on a whirlwind of public appearances that seemed celebratory. It was nearly a quarter century later on August 12, 2022—when the world, and he, had nearly forgotten about it—that the fatwa emerged from a shadow-world of proscriptions propelling the knife of a man who hadn't read more than a couple of pages of the book and had learnt his radicalism entirely on YouTube.

Knife: Meditations After An Attempted Murder, released this month, is Rushdie's attempt to come to terms with his stabbing by a young man he remembers as "a squat missile …a murderous ghost from the past". As we read the book, we realise that nothing prepares us for the stunning dreadfulness of the assault.

According to a paper in the *Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine* (January 2024), the average knife attack lasts 2.42 seconds. The one on Rushdie went on for 27 seconds. It is a miracle that we are reading this book today. Rushdie, an avowed atheist whose novels are replete with magic realism, both disputes and accepts the miraculousness of his survival.

In his 2010 book *Knife Crime: The Law of the Blade*, John McShane writes about "the quick, uncaring thrust of a blade from a feral youth lacking compassion or morality". And this is exactly what happened to Rushdie, beset by a radicalised man with conviction but neither principle nor reason.

"When you are stabbing someone, it's close and in your face. The experience is extremely graphic; it somehow tells an emotional story of hate or rage," wrote Robert Kaiser in a LinkedIn post in November 2018 ('*The Global Rise of Knife Crime—Why?*'). Four years later, it is pretty much the same conclusion Rushdie came to. His stabber, whom he refuses the dignity of a name and calls 'the A', "looked absurdly, almost endearingly young, and in his calm demeanour it was possible to imagine the folly of youth". But he didn't think Rushdie was a good person, thought him "disingenuous" and "admired" Ayatollah Khomeini. Rushdie saw the man "just stabbing wildly, stabbing and slashing, the knife flailing at me as if it had a life of its own". For the record, knife attacks fall into three categories: the stab, the slash, and slash and stab, the last being the deadliest. Rushdie describes the last.

AFP

> Like Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz, Salman Rushdie survived a knife attack. It was one of at least seven attempts on his life, propelled by a fatwa handed down almost a quarter century earlier. Like Mahfouz, his own words saved him from the scars of the trauma

It was a bloody denouement for a fatwa barely two sentences long, one of the briefest in the long history of fatwas and entirely unexplained. "Date: Bahman, Rajab; location: Jamaran, Tehran; issue: fatwa to kill Salman Rushdie, the author of the blasphemous book *Satanic Verses*; audience: Muslims of the world."

Rushdie was much respected in the *haute littérature* circles in Iran. The book, however, had not yet been translated into Persian. It had hardly been read in places where it had been banned—including in India, the first country to ban it. Khomeini was trying to quieten the growing grouse against his government by giving populist Islamism a target; the briefer the edict, the sharper and less debatable.

Since Rushdie's stabbing, death fatwas have been few and far between in the normal avalanche of fatwas. Six plots of varying worrisomeness were unearthed by the police, but they couldn't stop the flurry of fatwaic violence against people connected with the publication of *The Satanic Verses*—Italian translator Ettore Capriolo, knifed and seriously injured; Hitoshi Igarashi, the translator into Japanese, stabbed to death; Norwegian publisher William Nygaard, shot thrice; Azis Nesin, the Turkish translator, targeted by arsonists. After this barbarianism, brought on partly by frustration at the inability to get to Rushdie, was expended, death fatwas fell. It is comforting to think that this is because of a blowback against zealotry by the Muslim *qaum*, which has suffered enough hyperviolence itself, but perhaps it is also somewhat optimistic.

After all, a fatwa against Egyptian writer Farag Fouda ended in his murder in 1992. Another led to Egyptian Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz being stabbed several times in the neck in 1994 for a book he had written in 1959. A 2011 fatwa against Muammar al-Gaddafi led to his horrific death the same year. And a fatwa issued in 2013 against German-Egyptian author Hamed Abdel-Samad is still active.

Mahfouz and Rushdie survived their assassination attempts—deeply scarred, haunted by post-trauma brain-freeze, but eventually saved by their words.

(Views are personal)
(kajalrbasu@gmail.com)

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Strict scrutiny

Ref: *Patanjali case: how long can SC regulate the regulators* (May 1). Any advertisement dealing with things we ingest either as food, drinks or medicine needs to undergo strict scrutiny. Exemplary punishment under legal provisions should be handed out to prevent the recurrence of such incidents.
Sachidananda Satpathy, Sambalpur

Future polling

Ref: *Eliminating all doubts in the electoral process* (Apr 30). It has to be noted that even election processes have to evolve with the times. Instead of people being made to stand in queues, secure mobile- or computer-based polling systems seem to be the need of the day, not a return to paper ballot.
V Mani Iyer, Danappady

Alarm bells

Ref: *Political slugfest as JDS suspends Prajwal Revanna* (May 1). The political exploitation of this sexploitation case is higher than usual. The high-handedness of the BJP leadership in clearing the candidature of the accused Revanna despite being cautioned by local BJP leaders is an alarm bell for the party's future.
S P Ashta, New Delhi

Good picks

Ref: *Dube, Samson in; KL, Rinku overlooked for T20 World Cup* (May 1). The cricket board's selection committee is to be appreciated for picking Shivam Dube in the Indian T20 squad for the World Cup. The southpaw has been on a dream run in the IPL for the Chennai Super Kings. Also the return of wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant after his horrific accident in December 2022 is welcome. Hopefully, Team India will lift the cup that has been elusive since 2007.
S Sankaranarayanan, Chennai

Experience preferred

After the nightmare of the ODI World Cup, the selectors have come up with changes in the batting and bowling line-ups.The thought of selecting experienced players rather than younger ones was quite impressive. But it was disappointing that KL Rahul and Rinku Singh were overlooked. I hope this team will emerge at the top at this World Cup.
Shanmuk Shahith, Vizianagaram

Costly promises

The appeasement politics adopted by some parties is creating confusion. In order to woo voters, some power-mongers are damaging the free and fair electoral process envisaged by the Election Commission. This ultimately will become a burden to the exchequer. The EC must immediately step in.
P K Sreevalsan, Kannur

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POSTS OF THE DAY

Akhilesh Yadav @yadavakhilesh
The people will give their answer to the money-hungry party that is putting the lives of 80% of the population at risk for a few crores in the name of donations.

Sitaram Yechury @SitaramYechury
May Day Greetings! While commemorating the achievements of workers in the past, let's recommit to creating a future where labour rights, dignity, and equality flourish.

Anurag Thakur @ianuragthakur
India's future will not be decided by vote jihad and violence. This country will not be run by any fatwa or order but by Baba Saheb's Constitution.

War of words over Adhir's '... vote for BJP' remarks

TMC sees red as Cong distances itself from Baharampur candidate

PREETHA NAIR @New Delhi

AS a war of words broke out between Trinamool Congress leaders and Congress MP **Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury** over his "better to vote for BJP than TMC" remarks, the Congress distanced itself from the row, saying the TMC is part of the INDIA bloc and that the only goal of the party was to bring down the BJP's numbers in West Bengal.

The TMC launched an attack on West Bengal Congress chief Adhir Ranjan accusing him of being a "B team" the BJP, and blamed him for the obstacle in the seat-sharing talks of the INDIA bloc in the state.

The row began after an alleged video clip showed Chowdhury, Congress candidate from Baharampur, saying "it's better to vote for the BJP than to vote for the TMC" during an election rally.

Responding to the video, the TMC said in a post on X that after acting as "eyes and ears of BJP in Bengal," Chowdhury has now been promoted to be the "voice of the BJP in Bengal." "Listen to how the B-Team member is openly asking people to vote for BJP, a party that refused to release Bengal's rightful due and deprived our people of their rights. Only a Bangla birodhi can campaign for BJP, which has repeatedly insulted Bengal's icons," said the TMC. "On May 13, people of Baharampur will give a befitting response to this betrayal!" it added.

Calling Chowdhury as the BJP's agent, TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee said he is the sole reason for the failure of the INDIA bloc in the state.

TMC Rajya Sabha MP Saket Gokhale also attacked the Congress leader over the remarks. "While Mamata Banerjee fights against the full might of Modi's central agencies, Bengal Congress is openly asking votes for the BJP," he said.

Commenting on the remark, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said the goal of his party is to bring the BJP's numbers down in West Bengal and that TMC is a part of the INDIA bloc. "I do not know the context of what Adhir said, but our aim is to reduce the numbers of BJP in West Bengal significantly," Ramesh said.

"They won 18 out of 43 seats, we have to reduce their numbers and that is the only goal. Congress, along with Left parties, is a part of INDIA bloc, TMC leader Mamata Banerjee has also said they are part of the INDIA bloc, though we are not in a seat sharing arrangement," he said. The state is witnessing a contest between the TMC, Congress-Left alliance, and the BJP.

Candidates for Amethi and Rae Bareli 'soon'

The Congress will announce candidates for Amethi and Rae Bareli Lok Sabha seats on Thursday. Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge will announce the candidates in the 24-30 hours, said Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh. While there was unusual delay in announcing the candidates for the two seats, which are considered to be the family bastion of Gandhis, Ramesh dismissed the allegations.

DEEPFAKE

J'khand Cong chief summoned over Shah video

MUKESH RANJAN @ Ranchi

THE Delhi Police Special Branch has issued a notice to Jharkhand Congress chief Rajesh Thakur asking him to appear before an investigating officer at 10.30 am on Thursday in a case involving alleged uploading and sharing of fake videos of Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

On April 27, a video related to Shah went viral in which he purportedly said that if the BJP government was formed, the reservation benefits for SC, ST and OBCs will be abolished. Many Congress leaders, including Rajesh Thakur, shared the video on X.

The Delhi Police notice was issued after an FIR was registered following two complaints, one by the BJP and another from the Home Ministry.

More than 18 people, including political leaders, from seven states have been summoned by the Delhi Police. Three persons have been arrested for circulating the fake video, two in Gujarat and one in Assam.

An FIR has also been registered at the Argora police station in Ranchi by central BJP Janata Yuva Morcha leader Sanjay Kumar Mahato against Shailendra Hazra and Rupesh Rajak accusing them of making the fake video.

TMC removes Kunal Ghosh from general secretary post

SULAGNA SENGUPTA @Kolkata

THE Trinamool Congress removed Kunal Ghosh from the post of the West Bengal general secretary hours after he made statements that "did not align with the party," sources said. Ghosh shared the stage with a BJP Lok Sabha candidate and praised him.

A statement signed by TMC Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien said: "Kunal Ghosh has been expressing views that do not align with those of the party. It is important to clarify that these are his personal opinions and should not be attributed to the party." "Only statements issued from AITC headquarters should be considered the party's official position."

Ghosh was previously relieved from his role as the party spokesperson, O'Brien added. He shared the dais with BJP's Kolkata North candidate Tapas Ray and heaped praise on him. Ghosh skipped a rally organised by the party candidate from the Kolkata North Lok Sabha constituency, Sudip Bandopadhyay. The rally was meant to raise awareness for blood donation.

"Tapas Roy is a true mass leader. His doors are always open to party workers and common people. I have known him for decades. Unfortunately, our paths are now different as Tapas-da, despite our best efforts to retain him," Ghosh said, after he shared the stage with Roy. On his part, Roy accused TMC of displaying narrow politics. "I am hopeful that the elections would be free and fair, and no unscrupulous means would be used to retain the seat. Let the people cast their votes freely," he said.

Ghosh, despite his removal as the party spokesperson, was holding pressers regularly from the party headquarters.

On May 7, a total of 94 Lok Sabha seats across 12 states and UTs will vote in the third phase of seven-round polls. According to the Election Commission, 1,351 candidates will contest in the third phase.

Soon after his removal from the TMC post, Ghosh claimed that the party was aware of the school recruitment scam even before the 2021 assembly polls.

The damaging statement from Ghosh came amid the ongoing Lok Sabha elections, as the SSC scam has escalated into a significant issue in the polls.

"The party was well aware of the fact that largescale corruption and extortion in exchange for jobs was taking place in the school education department. The party was aware of it even before the 2021 assembly polls," he said in an interview with a Bengali news channel.

Ghosh is seen close to TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee, and kicked off a storm this year that the old guards in the party need to know when to step aside for the next generation. He also accused a section of old guards, including Sudip Bandopadhyay, of being hand-in-gloves with BJP.

Myanmar army, rebels intensify fight in Rakhine town, civilians trapped

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

THE situation in Buthidaung, Myanmar, remains precarious as more than 1500 Hindus and 20 Rakhines find themselves unable to reach safer areas amidst intensifying clashes between the military and the rebel group Arakan Army.

Compounding the crisis is a growing communal divide, with reports indicating that the military is coercing Rohingyas into combat roles, exacerbating tensions based on religion and ethnicity.

According to a source, "The battles are intensifying on the ground in Buthidaung. Over 1500 Hindus and 20 Rakhines are being prevented from leaving as the situation is unsafe there. Rohingyas are being trained as conscripts, and they are being made to target people based on their religion and ethnicity."

> **The battles are intensifying on the ground in Buthidaung. Over 1500 Hindus and 20 Rakhines are being prevented from leaving as the situation is unsafe there**
>
> Source

Instances of property destruction based on ethnic affiliations are on the rise, prompting authorities to impose a curfew in Buthidaung and Maungdaw from 7 pm to 6 am. The rebel Arakan Army claims control over a 16-mile stretch of road to ensure the safety of civilians.

Further clashes have erupted near the Thahtay hydropower project in Thandwe town. Reports also indicate a crackdown on medicine shops and a ban on crucial medicine imports, leaving residents anxious about access to essential healthcare.

"Due to intensified checking, even food packets are not being delivered, leading residents to fear an existential crisis," expressed a concerned source.

In a separate development, two Rohingya youths, allegedly recruited from refugee camps, were recently apprehended. Identified as Kefayet Ullah (19) from Kutupalong refugee camp and Anwar Mostafa (18) from Bhasan Char refugee camp, these individuals reportedly fled military training due to harsh conditions and food shortages within a week of enrolment.

The incident sheds light on a broader trend of Rohingya youths from Bangladesh's refugee camps being enticed into military training by the Myanmar junta, highlighting the vulnerability of displaced populations amidst ongoing conflict.

BODYLINE

CBI crackdown on app-based firms

MUKESH RANJAN @New Delhi

IN a massive crackdown against App-based fraudulent investment schemes involving Shigoo Technology Private Limited and Lillian Technocab Private Limited, the Central Bureau of Investigation on Wednesday conducted a nationwide search operation covering 30 locations across nine states and one UT, officials said.

The officials said that the raids were conducted in Delhi (NCR), Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

A senior CBI official said, "The searches led to the seizure of digital evidence, including mobile phones, computer hard drives, SIM cards, ATM/Debit cards, email accounts, and various incriminating documents." The CBI registered a case under relevant sections of the IPC and the Information Technology Act, 2000 against two private companies - Shigoo Technology Private Limited and Lillian Technocab Private Limited – and their directors, on the allegations that the accused were involved in a fraudulent investment scheme linked to HPZ Token App, the official said.

"The scheme misled the public into investing in non-existent crypto-currency mining machine rentals. The HPZ is an app-based token which promises users large gains by investing in mining machines for Bitcoin and other crypto currencies," the official said.

Firing at Salman house: Accused dies by suicide in Mumbai cop custody

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @Mumbai

ANUJ Thapan, 23, one of the four men arrested in connection with the firing incident outside actor Salman Khan's Bandra house, allegedly died by suicide on Wednesday at the crime branch lock-up at Mumbai police headquarters, officials said.

Anuj Thapan alias Anujkumar Omprakash Thapan was arrested from Punjab on April 26 and lodged in a common lock-up with 11 others arrested, police said.

"Thapan went to the washroom around 12:30 pm. When he did not return for some time, some inmates went to check on him and found him hanging from the window grill of the toilet. He was taken to Gokuldas Tejpal Hospital where he was declared dead. The body has been sent to JJ Hospital for post-mortem. CID will investigate the death case," said a police officer.

Officials said a man, who was in the lock-up, said Thapan had been anxious since Tuesday night about getting "stuck in the case" and worried that he wouldn't be able to get out of jail due to stringent sections of Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA).

The crime branch invoked MCOCA against the suspects, alleged to be members of the organised crime syndicate led by jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi and his brother Anmol Bishnoi. In a social media post, Anmol had claimed responsibility for the incident.

Bishnoi connect

Police claimed that Thapan was working for Lawrence Bishnoi gang. The crime branch recovered both the pistols carried by the shooters from Tapi river. Thapan and his accomplice Sonukumar Bishnoi are alleged to have supplied the firearms and ammunition used in the firing outside Salman Khan's house.

Police claimed that Thapan was working for Lawrence Bishnoi gang and delivered the weapons on the instructions of the bosses. The crime branch recovered both the pistols carried by the shooters from Tapi river. Thapan and his accomplice Sonukumar Bishnoi are alleged to have supplied the firearms and ammunition used in the firing outside Salman Khan's Galaxy Apartments on April 14. No one was injured in the attack.

Plea in SC seeking experts to examine side effects, risk factors of Covishield

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY
@New Delhi

A plea has been filed by lawyer Vishal Tiwari in the Supreme Court on Wednesday seeking an examination of AstraZeneca's Covishield vaccine and its side effects by constituting a team of expert doctors, including those from AIIMS.

In his fresh plea, a copy of which was accessed by this newspaper, filed in the top court, Tiwari sought directions to constitute, in the interest of health safety, a medical expert panel comprising doctors from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi, headed by its Director and supervised by a retired Justice of the Supreme Court. The panel would be tasked with examining the

Covishield vaccine, its side effects, and its risk factors.

"I seek directions to the Union of India (UOI) to establish a vaccine damage payment system for citizens who become severely disabled as a result of the vaccination drive during Covid-19. The SC should pass directions to the UOI to compensate people who are severely disabled or have died because of the side effects of the Corona vaccine administered to them during Covid-19," Tiwari stated in his plea.

The plea was filed as Tiwari stated that it was recently revealed that the Covishield Vaccine had caused and may cause side effects in rare cases. The pharmaceutical company and developer of this vaccine, AstraZeneca, have stated that its AZD1222 vaccine against Covid-19, which was made under licence in India as Covishield, could cause low platelet counts and the formation of blood clots in "very rare" cases.

"AstraZeneca has acknowledged a link between the vaccine and Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome, a medical condition characterized by abnormally low levels of platelets and the formation of blood clots," the plea said.

90% of 1,240 ragging cases resolved in 1 yr: UGC

KAVITA BAJELI-DATT @ New Delhi

AS many as 1,240 ragging incidents were reported in Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) over the last year, of which 1,113 cases, or 89.76 per cent cases, have been resolved by the University Grants Commission (UGC). Most of the ragging incidents - over 82 per cent - were reported by males from January 1, 2023, to April 28 this year, the UGC Chairman **M. Jagadesh Kumar**, said.

Kumar said the nearly 90 per cent of ragging cases that were resolved highlight the commitment of the UGC and the institutions to promptly address ragging complaints and help provide students with a safe learning environment for all students in universities and colleges across India.

Currently, 127 active complaints, or 10.24%, are still pending, and the UGC plans to resolve them soon.

According to data, 82.18% male, 17.74% female, and 0.08% transgender people reported ragging incidents. These complaints were reported in the dedicated toll-free anti-ragging helpline number (1800-180-5522) and also at the anti-ragging cell at the UGC.

The round-the-clock helpline was set up following the directive of the Supreme Court in 2009. Recently, the UGC asked the states to establish district-level panels to curb the menace of ragging in HEIs in compliance with the directives of the SC in its judgment in 2009.

These committees include various stakeholders, including the district collector/district magistrate, head of the university, superintendent of police, additional district magistrate, representative of local media, student organisations, and others. The idea behind these district committees is to proactively prevent ragging incidents and ensure swift action when complaints arise.

"Bringing together diverse stakeholders will help create better communication and coordinated efforts between educational institutions, law enforcement agencies, and anti-ragging squads," Kumar said.

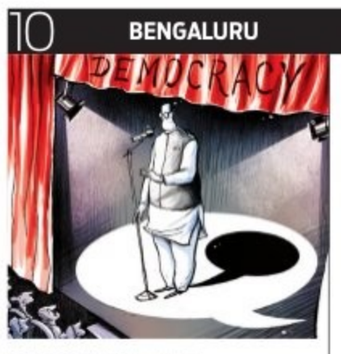
Apart from the helpline number, students can also register their complaints anonymously through UGC's secure portal: www.antiragging.in. Students can also mail UGC helpline@antiragging.in. The UGC monitors social media platforms and news reports for potential ragging incidents and takes suo moto action too.

Once a complaint is registered, a student receives a unique ID to track the case.

The complaint is also forwarded to the heads of the institutions and the police for immediate investigation.

The helpline also stays involved throughout and ensures that a thorough investigation is carried out. The reports are shared with the complainant, whose identity is not revealed, and if needed, the UGC can also launch reinvestigation.

INDIA	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	40	27	Mumbai	34	27
Bhopal	39	25	Panaji	24	13
Jaipur	39	26	Patna	42	26
Amritsar	37	22	Lucknow	40	25
Chennai	36	29	Port Blair	34	27
Kolkata	40	29	Imphal	33	16
Srinagar	22	06	Chandigarh	39	22



PROMINENT CANDIDATES

RAJKOT
BJP: Parshottam Rupala
Congress: Paresh Dhanani

VADODARA
BJP: Dr. Hemang Joshi
Congress: Jaspal Singh Padhiar

SABARKANTHA
BJP: Shobhana Baraiya
Congress: Tushar Chaudhary

VALSAD (ST)
BJP: Dhawal Patel
Congress: Anant Patel

BANASKANTHA
BJP: Dr. Rekhaben Chowdhury
Congress: Ganiben Thakor

GANDHINAGAR
BJP: Amit Shah
Congress: Sonal Patel

PORBANDAR
BJP: Mansukh Mandaviya
Congress: Lalit Vasoya

NAVSARI
BJP: CR Patil
Congress: Naishad Desai

BHARUCH
BJP: Mansukh Vasava
Congress-AAP: Chaitar Vasava

ANAND
BJP: Mitesh Patel
Congress: Amit Chavda

STATE WILL GO TO POLLS IN THIRD PHASE ON MAY 7

TOTAL SEATS 26 | CANDIDATES 301

- A maximum of 30 candidates are in fray from the Gandhinagar Lok Sabha seat, while only three candidates are contesting from the Bardoli seat.
- Objections were raised regarding the forms of candidates on several seats. Congress candidate's form for the Surat seat has been cancelled.
- For the Lok Sabha elections in Gujarat, it is mostly a direct contest between candidates of the BJP and the India alliance.

2019 PARTY-WISE RESULTS
BJP 26 seats | Cong 0 seats

BJP SET TO RETAIN SAFFRON CITADEL

Party seeks to repeat its 2014 feat in Gujarat and is upbeat by an unabated migration from Congress

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA @ Ahmedabad

AFTER ruling the state for more than two-and-a-half decades, the party consolidated its power by winning all 26 Lok Sabha seats in the past two elections. The party believes a hat-trick is in sight. In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, four BJP candidates won with more than 40% margin votes and seven others with over 30% margin votes. While the party's state unit president, C R Patil, won the Navsari Lok Sabha seat with 6,89,668 votes; Union Home Minister Amit Shah bagged the Gandhinagar Lok Sabha seat with a margin of 5,57,014.

Winning with the lowest margin of 12% votes was Dahod candidate Jashvantsinh Bhambhor. This time, Patil has set a target to win all 26 seats with a thick margin of 5 lakh votes on every seat. Recently, a confident Patil, during a public speech, claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to hit a hat-trick in his office. However, despite the party's confidence in winning all the parliamentary constituencies, it is facing trouble on a few seats, owing to stronger rivals, the party's internal factionalism and the cadres opposing the candidature of a few.

Congress candidate Geniben Thakor(48) from Banaskantha district is the sole woman Congress MLA in the current Gujarat Assembly. She is aggressively campaigning and giving a tough time to BJP candidate Rekhaben Chaudhary. In her statement, Geniben directly attacked the district police forces, saying they function like puppets at the hands of the ruling party. Giving the party a tough time in North Gujarat is Sabarkantha's official candidate, Sobhana Bariaya. BJP leaders are against her nomination because they see her as an outsider. Her husband, Mahendra Baraiya, joined the BJP two years ago.

Just a day before her name was announced, she resigned as a government teacher. Besides, the feeling that the party leadership was sidelining their needs had also gripped a section of the party. Adding to the troubles are internal conflicts that are rife within the party over candidates in five seats in the state. Though the party leaders are trying their best to douse the fire, success seems to evade them in a few seats, said a party worker from central Gujarat wishing anonymity. BJP chief spokesman Yamal Vyas expressed confidence in winning all seats because of Modi magic, the Ram temple and abolition of Article 370 in J&K. All these will surely fetch the desired public support, he added.

Two candidates replaced

In a rare occurrence, the BJP changed Baroda and Sabarkantha candidates. Ranjanben Bhatt, a two-term MP, initially got the ticket for Baroda but faced opposition, leading to her withdrawal. Speculation was rife that her removal stemmed from state president's disapproval. Similarly, Bhikhaji Thakor was nominated for Sabarkantha, but in the face of protests, his candidature was changed. The shift is viewed as part of the evolving political landscape. In Amreli and Surendra Nagar, rift surfaced, intensifying challenges over allocation of tickets to lesser-known leaders.

Five troublesome seats

BHARUCH: Traditionally held by senior Congress leader Ahmed Patel, the seat was allocated to the AAP as part of the Congress-AAP seat-sharing agreement. There were demands within the Congress for a ticket to someone from Ahmed Patel's family. Fielded by AAP, Chetan Vasava enjoys significant support among tribals. BJP's six-time MP Mansukh Vasava is contesting against him.

RAJKOT: Controversy stemming from Rupala's statement on Kshatriyas has stirred unrest not only in Gujarat but in other states also. While agitations were staged in Rajkot and Saurashtra, the extent of Kshatriya influence is unclear. Rupala has apologised for his statement, urging voters not to direct their anger towards PM Modi.

BHAVNAGAR: Despite being a BJP stronghold in Saurashtra, the party faces difficulties for two reasons: AAP has fielded a candidate in alliance with Congress, and the Kshatriya stir involving Rupala.

BANASKANTHA: The contest is between two women — Genie Bain of Congress and BJP's Rekha Chaudhary. Bain is a formidable leader with solid local connections, while Chaudhary is from the family that founded Banas Dairy. Bain's grassroots connect, unique style of filing nomination papers on a tractor, and emotive campaigning have garnered attention. She is also a two-time MLA.

JUNAGADH: Strong opposition surrounds BJP's candidate Rajesh Chudasama in Junagadh. He faces scrutiny regarding a case related to the murder of a doctor.

BJP won all seats in 2019 ELECTIONS

● VOTES ● MARGIN

RAJKOT
Turnout: 63.49%
WINNER: MOHAN KUNDARIYA
● 7,58,645 ● 3,68,407

VADODARA
Turnout: 68.18%
WINNER: RANJANBEN BHATT
● 8,83,719 ● 589,177

SABARKANTHA
Turnout: 67.77%
WINNER: DIPSINH RATHOD
● 7,01,984 ● 2,68,987

VALSAD
Turnout: 75.48%
WINNER: DR. K C PATEL
● 7,71,980 ● 3,53,797

BANASKANTHA
Turnout: 65.03%
WINNER: PARBATBHAI PATEL
● 6,79,108 ● 3,68,296

GANDHINAGAR
Turnout: 66.08%
WINNER: AMIT SHAH
● 8,94,624 ● 5,57,014

PORBANDAR
Turnout: 57.21%
WINNER: RAMESHBHAI DHADUK
● 5,63,881 ● 2,29,823

NAVSARI
Turnout: 66.40%
WINNER: C. R. PATIL
● 9,72,739 ● 6,89,668

BHARUCH
Turnout: 73.55%
WINNER: MANSUKHBHAI VASAVA
● 6,37,795 ● 3,34,214

ANAND
Turnout: 67.04%
WINNER: MITESHBHAI PATEL
● 6,33,097 ● 1,97,718

ELECTION2024

'Focus on PVTG bearing dividends'

The Election Commission said on Wednesday its efforts over the last two years to include the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) in the electoral process have started showing results. The poll panel said members from these communities participated enthusiastically in voting in the first two phases of the ongoing Lok Sabha election and pointed out that the Shompen tribe of Great Nicobar voted for the first time in a parliamentary election.

4 candidates file papers in J'khand

Three INDIA bloc candidates, Jai Prakash Bhai Patel, Anupama Singh and Vinod Kumar Singh, and BJP nominee Manish Jaiswal filed their nomination papers on Wednesday for three Lok Sabha seats in Jharkhand. Mandu legislator Patel, who recently switched to Congress from the BJP, filed his nomination papers for the Hazaribag Lok Sabha constituency. Hazaribag and Koderma will go to polls in the fifth phase on May 20.

CHHATTISGARH

Modi govt didn't use majority to scrap quota in 10 yrs: Shah

EJAZ KAISER @ Raipur

UNION Home Minister Amit Shah has refuted allegations levelled by the Congress that the BJP would abolish reservations after gaining a majority in the forthcoming elections.

Addressing a poll rally at Katghora in the Korba Lok Sabha constituency on Wednesday, he stated, "After remaining in power for 10 years, we didn't remove reservations nor will we allow anyone to do so in the future. Modiji used the majority to scrap Article 370 (in Kashmir), construction of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, triple talaq, and introducing Citizenship (Amendment) Act."

Eulogizing the achievements of the BJP-led Centre, he said PM Narendra Modi has a 10-year track record and a 25-year agenda for 'Viksit Bharat', while seeking the people's support for his straight third term. Shah claimed that in the second term, the Modi government has eliminated Naxalism from the country but couldn't do so in Chhattisgarh owing to the hindrance of the Congress-led Bhupesh Baghel government. He held the Congress accountable for nurturing terrorism and Maoism in the country for years to win polls.

"Despite Maoists accepting they suffered a huge loss, the Congress called the encounters fake. After the BJP came to power in the state, 95 Maoists have been neutralized, and 350 cadres surrendered in four months," he added. Reiterating the commitment to get rid of Maoists, Shah assured that the third term for PM will wipe out the banned outfit from Chhattisgarh in the next two years.

Shah professed that PM Modi has already scored a century in the first two phases of polling as the BJP surges ahead towards a stage of 400 seats. Citing Korba as a tough seat, he asked the people to support the BJP candidate Saroj Pandey, whom he cited as an accomplished parliamentarian.

'Cong nurtured Maoism, terrorism in country'

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has held the Congress accountable for nurturing terrorism and Maoism in the country for years to win polls. "Despite Maoists accepting they suffered a huge loss, the Congress called the encounters fake. After the BJP came to power in the state, 95 Maoists have been neutralized, and 350 cadres surrendered in four months," he added. Reiterating the commitment to get rid of Maoists, Shah assured that the third term for PM will wipe out the banned outfit from Chhattisgarh in the next two years. Shah professed that PM Modi has already scored a century in the first two phases of polling

ASSAM

Priyanka hits out at BJP, says party helped Prajwal to flee

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

CONGRESS leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday hit out at the BJP on the sexual abuse allegations against Karnataka MP Prajwal Revanna, alleging that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah did not stop the JD(S) leader from fleeing the country.

"They talk about women's security. You must have seen what is happening in Karnataka. A person linked to their party [BJP and JD(S) are in alliance] has done such crime that thousands of videos have surfaced. From a dais, Modiji sought votes for the person who had committed the crimes. The criminal has fled the country. Nobody stopped him.

Modiji did not stop him. Amit Shahji did not stop him. He was allowed to leave," Vadra said while addressing an election rally in Assam's Dhubri district. She alleged that the BJP remained silent and shielded those who had committed crimes against women in Unnao and Hathras in UP.

"In Manipur, the wife of a security personnel was stripped and paraded in public (along with another woman). Everybody has seen that video. How were Modiji and Amit Shahji silent? They did not come to rescue the woman. No action was taken. They are allowing crimes to take place everywhere," the Congress leader said.

"Modiji clicked photos with the wrestlers after they had won medals at the Olympics. When the same women said a wrong was done to them by a leader of the party (BJP), Modiji remained silent," she said.

She said Modi has been cut off from the people of the country, with no understanding of their miseries. "Like the arrogant kings of olden times, he has no idea about what people are going through. The arrogance is such that their they are asking to vote the BJP to power so the party can change the Constitution," Vadra said.

'Modi is cut off from people of the country'

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been cut off from the people of the country, with no understanding of their miseries. "Like the arrogant kings of olden times, he has no idea about what people are going through. The arrogance is such that their they are asking to vote the BJP to power so the party can change the Constitution," Vadra said. She lashed out at the BJP for its claims that it is honest. "BJP often says Congress did not do anything in 70 years. Congress did not earn that much money in 70 years which they earned in 10 years. They became the richest party. And they say we are corrupt and they are honest," she said.

'Modi Ki Guarantee will eclipse Cong Nyay promises. BJP to sweep C'garh'

CHHATTISGARH chief minister **Vishnu Deo Sai**, 60, exudes confidence in 'Modi Ki Guarantee' and his good governance, which he believes will ensure an 11-seat BJP sweep in the state. Talking tough on Maoists, he said dialogue can resolve any problem and restore peace. In an interview with **Ejaz Kaiser**, he said Congress has failed as a constructive opposition. **Excerpts**:

What gives your party the confidence to win all 11 Lok Sabha seats in Chhattisgarh?
The voter turnout and their enthusiasm in the previous two phases of polling. This indicates people are eager to play their constructive role in giving PM Narendra Modi a third term for creating a 'Viksit Bharat'. Our commitment to policy promises has also evoked an encouraging response.

Which constituencies do you find challenging?
The BJP will register victory in every seat with a sizeable margin.

Your government is open to dialogue with the Maoists. However, the Union home minister has vowed to eliminate the rebels in two years?
We have always said that violence cannot be the solution. Maoists should give up arms, join the mainstream with rehabilitation. But if anyone fires at us or causes blasts, then our responses will be sterner and more severe. Maoists shouldn't get shelter for getting political dividends.

Will Congress' 5 'Nyay' guarantees limit the impact of 'Modi Ki Guarantee'?
'Modi Ki Guarantee' not only connects people emotionally but also remains the PM's pledge to deliver on the aspirations of the common man. Only during elections the Congress remembers the poor, farmers, backward, tribals, youths or women and floats their 'Nyay' scheme. It doesn't work. The BJP and Modi ki Guarantee are the symbols of trust in the Centre. The Modi Ki Guarantee will eclipse the 'Nyay' promises.

Rahul Gandhi accused BJP and RSS of doing injustice to tribals and not allowing them to dream big...
'Royal' Rahul, born with a silver spoon and brought up in a privileged lineage, won't understand the plight of tribals or the issues of Bastar. Adivasi are the protectors of forests. They are familiar with the game plan of Congress.

Is it the Modi magic that will work in Chhattisgarh?
PM Modi has a charismatic appeal as a popular global leader. He has acquired such recognition through his eagerness to work for the poor, tribals, backwards, the youth, farmers and women. He has worked without availing of a single day leave in the last 10 years. Modiji has put an end to part-time politics.

Congress accuses your party of poaching on party leaders...
Everybody knows Congress is a sinking ship. It should do soul-searching as to why their party with good leaders has fallen on such bad days

It seems the religious conversion issue benefits the party?
Tribals are becoming victims of religious conversions by allurement, force or misrepresentation. The Adivasi community realises that we fought against conversion that destroyed their cultural identity. BJP will soon bring a new tough anti-conversion law in the state.

Do you believe the tribals too are divided on religious lines, particularly in Bastar zone?
The unity of tribal communities is not good news for anti-national forces. Tribals remain one and they symbolise Hindutva, Sanatan with the lifestyle in compatibility with the environment.

How about consistent allegations of the misuse of the ED, CBI and others by the Centre?
Why shouldn't there be a thorough probe into corruption? As PM Modi has given a free hand to investigating agencies, several scams have been unearthed in so many states in the country. When the law takes its course, Opposition comes up with baseless allegations over the misuse of Central agencies.

11-YR SENTENCE
Given to a female fitness influencer in Saudi Arabia over terrorist offenses

GLOBAL WEATHER
LR: Light Rain • WI: Windy • HR: Heavy Rain • SN: Snow • TDS: Thundershower • LC: Light Cloud • SNY: Sunny

Beijing	28	12	SNY	Los Angeles	23	14	SNY
Colombo	34	28	SNY	Melbourne	16	8	LC
Dhaka	38	27	SNY	Moscow	13	3	LC
Dubai	28	26	LR	New York	29	13	SNY
Houston	29	23	LR	Singapore	33	28	LR
Istanbul	16	12	LC	Toronto	16	10	LR
London	18	10	LR	Washington	18	7	SNY

300 students arrested at Columbia Univ, City College

Dueling groups of protesters punch, shove and kick one another

LOS ANGELES

ABOUT 300 people were arrested in police crackdowns on pro-Palestinian protests at Columbia University and City College, New York City Mayor Eric Adams said.

Dueling groups of protesters clashed Wednesday at the University of California, Los Angeles, grappling in fistfights and shoving, kicking and using sticks to beat one another. Hours earlier, police burst into a building at Columbia University that pro-Palestinian protesters took over and broke up a demonstration that had paralyzed the school while inspiring others.

After a couple of hours of scuffles between pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli demonstrators at UCLA, police wearing helmets and face shields formed lines and slowly separated the groups. That quelled the violence, and the scene was calm as day broke.

Tent encampments of protesters calling on universities to stop doing business with Israel or companies that support the war in Gaza have spread across the country in a student movement unlike any other in the 21st century, reaching from New York to Texas and California. The ensuing crackdown by police on some college campuses has stirred echoes of the much larger student protest movement during the Vietnam War era.

Demonstrators clash at an encampment at UCLA early Wednesday in Los Angeles. Dueling groups of protesters have clashed at Ithe University of California, LA, grappling in fistfights and shoving, kicking and using sticks to beat one another | AP

There have been confrontations with law enforcement and more than 1,000 arrests.

In rarer instances, university officials and protest leaders struck agreements to restrict the disruption to campus life and upcoming commencement ceremonies. The clashes at UCLA took place around a tent encampment built by pro-Palestinian protesters, who erected a line of parade barricades, plywood and wooden pallets at the edge of the camp while counter-protesters tried to pull them down. Video showed fireworks exploding over and in the encampment.

People threw chairs and other objects and at one point a group piled on a person who lay on the ground, kicking and beating them with sticks until others pulled them out of the scrum. It was not clear how many people might be injured.

LA Mayor Karen Bass called the violence "absolutely abhorrent and inexcusable" in a social media post and said officers from the LAPD were on the scene. The university said it had requested help. *AP*

Blinken says Hamas will be blamed if ceasefire deal does not move forward

TEL AVIV

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was meeting with Israeli leaders on Wednesday in his push for a ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas, saying 'the time is now' for an agreement that would free hostages and bring a pause in the nearly seven months of war in Gaza. He said Hamas would bear the blame for any failure to get a deal off the ground.

Blinken is on his seventh visit to the region since the war erupted in October in his bid to secure what's been an elusive deal between Israel and Hamas that could avert an Israeli incursion into the southern Gaza city of Rafah, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are sheltering.

The current round of talks appears to be serious, but the sides remain far apart on one key issue whether the war should end as part of an emerging deal.

"We are determined to get a ceasefire that brings the hostages home and to get it now, and the only reason that that wouldn't be achieved is because of Hamas," Blinken told Israel's ceremonial President Isaac Herzog at a meeting.

Blinken said the deal would also allow much needed food, medicine and water to get into Gaza, where the war has sparked a humanitarian crisis and displaced much of the territory's population.

The current deal that is being discussed 'with brokering by the US, Egypt and Qatar' would see the release of dozens of hostages in exchange for a six-week halt in fighting as part of an initial phase, according to an Egyptian official and Israeli media.

Hundreds of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel would also be released, including some serving long sentences.

But a sticking point remains over what happens next. Hamas has demanded assurances that an eventual release of all hostages will bring a complete end to Israel's nearly seven-month assault in Gaza and a withdrawal of its troops from the devastated territory.

Israel has offered only an extended pause, vowing to resume its offensive once the first phase of the deal is over. However, the fighting in Gaza continues. *AP*

WAR WATCH
ISRAEL-GAZA: DAY 208

DEATH TOLL SO FAR
36,199

Lebanese leader blames Hezbollah
The leader of a main Christian political party in Lebanon blasted the Shiite militant group Hezbollah saying it has harmed Lebanon without making a dent in Israel's offensive. AP

Pioneering China scientist let into his lab after protest

BEIJING

THE first scientist to publish a sequence of the COVID-19 virus in China said he was allowed back into his lab after he spent days locked outside, sitting in protest.

Zhang Yongzhen wrote in an online post on Wednesday, just past midnight, that the medical center that hosts his lab had 'tentatively agreed' to allow him and his team to return and continue their research for the time being.

"Now, team members can enter and leave the laboratory freely," Zhang wrote in a post on Weibo, a Chinese social media platform. He added that he is negotiating a plan to relocate the lab in a way that doesn't disrupt his team's work with the Shanghai Public Health Clinical Center, which hosts his lab.

Zhang and his team were suddenly told they had to leave their lab for renovations on Thursday, setting off the dispute, he said in an earlier post that was later deleted. On Sunday, Zhang began a sit-in protest outside his lab after he found he was locked out, a sign of continuing pressure on Chinese scientists conducting research on the coronavirus.

Zhang sat outside on flattened cardboard in drizzling rain, and members of his team unfurled a banner that read "Resume normal scientific research work," pictures posted online show. News of the protest spread widely on Chinese social media, putting pressure on local authorities.

Zhang's dispute with his host institution was the latest in a series of setbacks, demotions and ousters since the virologist published the sequence in January 2020 without approval.

Beijing has sought to control information related to the virus since it first emerged. Zhang's ordeal started when he and his team decoded the virus and wrote an internal notice warning authorities. *AP*

COERCION

Pak to block SIM cards of 5 lakh tax defaulters

ISLAMABAD

AUTHORITIES in Pakistan have decided to block the mobile phone SIM cards of over half a million tax defaulters as part of the drive to take action against tax evaders.

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) in an Income Tax General Order (ITGO) said the mobile SIMs of 506,671 individuals, who failed to file their tax returns for 2023, will stay blocked until restored by the FBR or the Commissioner Inland Revenue having authority over the person.

It ordered the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and all telecom providers to immediately implement the Income Tax General Order (ITGO) no 01 of 2024 to block their SIMs and file a compliance report by May 15, Dawn News reported.

An official source said the FBR has identified 2.4 million potential taxpayers who did not exist on the tax rolls. Notices were subsequently issued to these individuals.

The FBR has selected over 0.5 million individuals out of the 2.4 million for SIM blockade based on one criterion: they must have declared taxable income in one of the past three years and these individuals did not file their returns for tax year 2023.

According to the Active Taxpayers List (ATL), the FBR received 4.2 million taxpayers until March 1, 2024, as against 3.8 million returns received during the same period of last year.

This shows a marginal increase during the period under review. In tax year 2022, FBR received a total of 5.9 million income tax returns.

According to the FBR official, SIMs will be automatically restored for persons who file tax returns for 2023.

Every Monday, FBR updates its ATL listings.

Every Tuesday, the names of persons who appear on the ATL list will be identified and submitted to the PTA and telecom companies for restoration.

The officer emphasised that there would be no separate restoration procedures, and the entire process would be completed automatically.

The blockade of SIM cards is a new easy measure taken by the FBR to encourage low-income people to submit their tax returns to increase the number of return filers, which appears to be a good idea on paper.

The FBR's introduction of high withholding tax rates for non-filers follows a similar blueprint.

According to sources, persons who have filed their returns once can avoid paying high withholding tax rates in subsequent years. *PTI*

China's third aircraft carrier begins sea trials

BEIJING

CHINA's third aircraft carrier, the Fujian, the most advanced homemade warship, began its maiden sea trials on Wednesday as Beijing ramped up its naval power amid increasing tensions with the US in the disputed South China Sea and Taiwan Strait.

The ship left Shanghai Jiangnan Shipyard on Wednesday morning for the sea trials, primarily to test the reliability and stability of the aircraft carrier's propulsion and electrical systems, *Xinhua* reported.

Since its launch in June 2022, the Fujian has completed its mooring trials, outfitting work and equipment adjustments. It has met the technical requirements for sea trials.

Ahead of the trials, China has imposed maritime traffic controls around the mouth of the Yangtze River where the Jiangnan shipyard ship is located for "military activities".

The traffic controls would last till May 9, the report said.

According to the previous official media reports, China plans to have five to six aircraft carriers by 2035 for strategic deployment in the disputed South China Sea, where Beijing seeks to assert its claims over most of the vast area, the Taiwan Strait which separates the Chinese mainland and Taiwan and the Indian Ocean where Beijing is increasing its power projection.

Tugboats towing China's third aircraft carrier for maiden sea trials from Shanghai Jiangnan Shipyard | AP

Elaborating on China's strategy in acquiring aircraft carriers, Senior Col. (rtd) Zhou Bo, who spent four decades with the People's Liberation Army, said China sees their importance for possible war far from home. According to an estimate, China is building almost a naval ship a month. It is helping Pakistan to modernise its navy by providing its latest frigates and submarines. *PTI*

MAY DAY CRIES
A protester cries after seeing others being detained during the May Day demonstration on May 1 in Paris. Thousands marched through the French capital, seeking better pay and working conditions. Anti-Olympics activists joined the rally in Paris which will host the Summer Games in less than three months | AP

J&J unit to pay $6.5 bn over 25 yrs to settle talc case

NEW BRUNSWICK

A subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson is now proposing to pay approximately $6.48 billion over 25 years as part of a settlement in the US to cover allegations that its baby powder containing talc caused ovarian cancer.

The lawsuits filed against J&J had alleged its talcum powder caused users to develop ovarian cancer, through use for feminine hygiene, or mesothelioma, a cancer that strikes the lungs and other organs.

The claims contributed to drop in J&J's sales of baby powder, prompting the company to stop selling its talc-based products in 2020. In 2022, J&J announced plans to cease sales of the product worldwide.

J&J said that the reorganization plan for the subsidiary that was being announced on Wednesday was significantly different from the previous reorganization that was announced. Those differences include a three-month solicitation period during which ovarian claimants can vote for or against the plan. This is something that was denied in prior bankruptcy cases, the company said. And if 75% of claimants vote in favor of the plan, a subsidiary may file a "prepackaged" Chapter 11 bankruptcy to secure its confirmation.

J&J said that the plan would resolve 99.75% of all pending talc lawsuits against it and its affiliates in the US. The remaining lawsuits will be addressed outside of the plan. *AP*

ASIA MATTERS

INDONESIA

MOUNT RUANG VOLCANO SPEWS DEBRIS

Mount Ruang volcano spewed more hot clouds on Wednesday after an eruption the previous day forced the closure of schools and airports, pelted villages with volcanic debris and prompted hundreds of people to flee. Seven airports, including Sam Ratulangi international airport in Manado, the capital of North Sulawesi province, remained closed after Tuesday's eruption, the second in two weeks. The volcano is on tiny Ruang Island, part of the Sitaro islands chain. The Indonesian geological agency urged people to stay at least 7 km from the volcano's crater. *AP*

MALAYSIA

'RUMOUR MONGERS SHOULD BE JAILED'

Rumour-mongers who spread fake news of government approval for a casino licence in Forest City, Johor, should be put behind bars, says Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim. He questioned how such talk came about and said those responsible for such malicious rumours against the royal institution should be punished, *The Straits Times* reported.

SINGAPORE

ENTERTAINER HOSPITALISED AFTER STROKE

Popular entertainer Suhaimi Yusof was hospitalised following a stroke. Speaking to Malay news outlet *Berita Mediacorp* from his ward in Tan Tock Seng Hospital, Suhaimi said: "The doctor conducted multiple tests and confirmed that I suffered a [cerebellar] stroke. My condition is stable but I'll probably be here for treatment for a week. "According to Suhaimi, he had just left his house to attend an event. However, he felt that his "head was spinning" as soon as he exited the lift, *CNA reported*. "Thankfully, I managed to call my wife," who called an ambulance.

US imposes new sanction on firms tied to Russia's weapons programme

WASHINGTON

THE US on Wednesday imposed new sanctions on hundreds of firms and people tied to Russia's weapons development program, more than a dozen Chinese firms accused of helping Russia find workarounds to sanctions and individuals tied to the death of Russian dissident Alexey Navalny.

The sanctions imposed by the Treasury and State departments target Russia's military-industrial base, chemical weapons programmes, people and firms in third countries that help Russia acquire weapons components.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said the action "will further disrupt and degrade Russia's war efforts by going after its military industrial base and the evasion networks that help supply it."

The sanctions come as the Senate gave final approval to legislation barring imports of Russian uranium, boosting US efforts to disrupt Russia's war in Ukraine. President Joe Biden is expected to sign the bill into law.

About 12% of the uranium used to produce electricity at US nuclear power plants is imported from Russia, according to the US Energy Information Administration.

Janet Yellen

A spokesperson for the National Security Council said Wednesday that Bidenshares lawmakers' concerns about US reliance on Russia for low-enriched uranium to support its domestic nuclear fleet.

Included in Wednesday's sanctions announcement are importers of cotton cellulose and nitrocellulose used to produce gunpowder, rocket propellants and other explosives. Also included are Russian government entities and people tied to Russia's chemical and biological weapons programs and firms related to Russia's natural gas construction projects.

A group of 16 targets in China and Hong Kong, most of which are related to Russian procurement workarounds, are also included in the latest sanctions announcement.

Firms in countries including China, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Slovakia, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates are accused of helping Russia acquire technology and equipment from abroad. *AP*

EXPRESS READ

Teen boy arrested over school attack in England

A 17-year-old boy has been arrested following reports of three people being injured at a school in Sheffield, northern England, on Wednesday. "Officers are at the scene after responding to reports of an incident involving a sharp object at the school on Birley Lane at around 8.50 am. Two adults were checked over at the scene after suffering minor injuries," Police said. PTI

Portuguese-flagged ship hit by Houthis

A Portuguese-flagged container ship came under attack by a drone in the far reaches of the Arabian Sea, corresponding with a claim by Yemen's Houthi rebels that they assaulted the ship there, authorities said Tuesday. The attack on the MSC Orion, occurring some 600 km off the coast of Yemen, appeared to be the first confirmed deep-sea assault by the Houthis. AP

Market Watch

MARKET				GOLD				SILVER				FOREX	
188.50	▼	Sensex	74,482.78	₹1,090	▲	24 carat (10 gm)	₹71,660	₹500	▲	1 kg	₹83,000	▼ Dollar	83.48
38.55	▼	Nifty	22,604.85	₹1,000	▼	22 carat (10 gm)	₹65,700	₹5	▲	10 gm	₹830	▲ Euro	89.18

Apr sees uptick in start-up funding

Fund inflows not only create opportunity for recovery but also indicate turnaround in FY25

UMA KANNAN @ Bengaluru

START-UP ecosystem is slowly recovering from funding winter as late-stage start-ups have managed to raise significant funds in April 2024 compared to the same month last year.

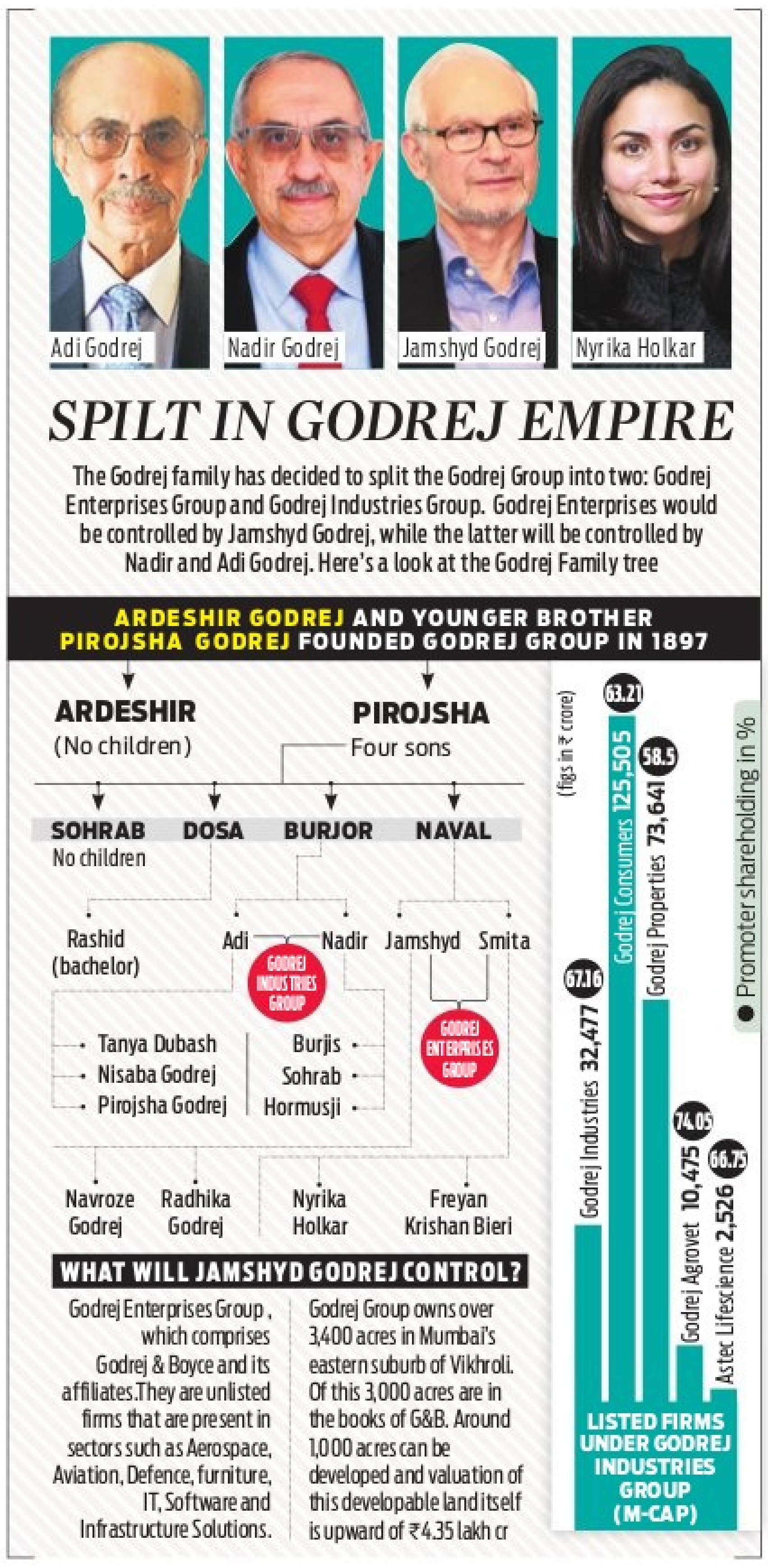
As per data from analytics firm Venture Intelligence, there were 10 late-stage funding deals as against four in the same period last year. Start-ups raised $159 million in 19 deals compared to $62 million in eight deals in April 2023. Akshay Munjal, founder & CEO, Hero Vired, said, "Indian start-up funding ecosystem, despite facing hurdles in the last financial year, experienced a refreshing boost in April this year with several noteworthy late-stage funding deals."

This sudden surge not only creates an opportunity for recovery but also indicates a turnaround in funding this fiscal. "The narrative of start-up funding last month is one of optimism and collaboration, paving way for more innovative and inclusive future," he added.

As per venture capitalists, start-up funding will continue in coming months. On Wednesday, AiDash, an enterprise SaaS company, announced the official closing of its Series C funding at $58.5 million. Early-stage start-ups are seeing major fundings as Equirus InnovateX Fund (EIF) led seed investment round in Lithium Battery Ecosystem start-up PointO. EIF led the round with an investment of ₹5 crore, from the ₹6.2 crore raised in this round.

Last week, MatchLog Solutions raised $1.5 million in pre-series A funding and Healthtech AI start-up Endimension Technology raised ₹6 crore in Pre-Series A round led by Inflection Point Ventures. In the second week of April, AI cloud and platform-as-a-service start-up Neysa raised $20 million in Seed funding. Led by Matrix Partners India, Nexus Venture Partners, and NTTVC, it said the funding will help drive Gen-AI-cloud platform as a service and observability for India and global markets.

Manoj Agarwal, Managing Partner, Seafund, said, "The uptick is driven by a combination of renewed investor interest, market corrections, and a focus on sustainable and innovative business models. While the future looks promising, it's important for start-ups to build robust risk mitigation strategies to navigate potential global market and economic volatilities."



Godrej family firms to jointly develop land in Mumbai suburb

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

GODREJ & Boyce and Godrej Properties will continue to develop a land parcel of Vikhroli owned by Godrej & Boyce. The announcement came a day after the Mumbai-based Godrej family decided to split their business interests. As per the settlement, Godrej & Boyce is being controlled and its affiliates will now be controlled by Jamshyd Godrej while Godrej Properties will be controlled by Adi Godrej.

The Godrej Group owns about 3,400 acres in Mumbai's eastern suburb of Vikhroli, making them one of the largest land holders in the country's most expensive real estate market. While a big chunk of this land holding falls under ecologically sensitive mangroves and 300 acres are believed to be encroached, about 1,000 acres can be developed. Realty experts believe one acre of land in this area commands a price of ₹70-80 crore and the development potential of 1,000 acre of land is over ₹4 lakh crore.

Jamshyd Godrej, Chairperson & MD, Godrej & Boyce, said, "The future development of Vikhroli presents a unique opportunity to create a holistic space in the metropolis of Mumbai where urban development and biodiversity co-exists harmoniously. Godrej Construction and Godrej Properties bring complementary strengths, and this has translated into the launch of successful real estate projects in Vikhroli."

DGCA

Regulator deregisters all 54 leased Go First planes

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

A year after they were first grounded, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Wednesday deregistered all 54 Go First aircraft. This came after the Delhi High court had in its order asked the country's aviation regulator to do so in five days.

Hit hard by financial turbulence and engine woes, the Wadia family promoted airline stopped flying in May last year and is undergoing an insolvency resolution process.

Foreign lessors that have leased planes to the airline had moved the court to take back the aircraft.

Some of the notices deregistering Go First's aircraft were uploaded on the Directorate General of Civil Aviation website. An A320 plane, having registration number VT-WJL, was deregistered on April 29. The request for deregistration under IDERA was received by the regulator way back on May 11, 2023. The lessor is based in Ireland, according to a deregistration notice.

Under the Cape Town Convention, a lessor can opt for the Irrevocable De-registration and Export Request Authorisation (IDERA). Generally, the option is exercised by lessors when there is a default by an airline with respect to a leased aircraft.

Waning demand, high base effect pull down car sales

ARSHAD KHAN @ New Delhi

IMPACTED by waning pent-up demand over a very high base, passenger vehicle (PV) wholesales are estimated to have grown by a meagre 1.50% year-on-year in April 2024 to about 340,000 units. Sales of the three top players – Maruti Suzuki (MSIL), Hyundai Motor (HMIL) and Tata Motors - barely managed to remain in green last month.

"The relatively subdued growth partly stems from waning pent-up replacement demand, which supported the industry over the past couple of years, and also the effect of a higher base," said Srikumar Krishnamurthy, Senior VP & Co-Group Head - Corporate Ratings, ICRA Limited.

"The domestic PV industry reached an all-time high volume of 4.2 million units in FY24, with retail sales being aided by healthy replacement demand.

Hoping for recovery

The industry is now pinning hopes on new launches, a normal monsoon and a favourable election outcome to generate fresh demand and push sales growth numbers higher. Maruti Suzuki's domestic PV sales stood at 137,952 units in April 2024 as against 137,320 units sold in April 2023

Even as the underlying demand drivers remain supportive, the volume growth for the PV segment is likely to moderate to 3-6% (from an elevated base) during FY2025," added Krishnamurthy. The industry is now pinning hopes on new launches, a normal monsoon and a favourable election outcome to generate fresh demand and push sales growth numbers higher. The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki's (MSIL) domestic PV sales stood at 137,952 units in April 2024 compared to 137,320 units sold in April 2023 - a flat growth. This is a big slump sequentially given the carmaker had sold 152,718 units in March 2023.

MSIL sales were lifted by the utility vehicle segment as demand for its mini and compact cars continued to remain under tremendous pressure. The carmaker is now betting big on the new Swift to revive its fortune in the compact segment.

Hyundai Motor India (HMIL) registered total sales of 63,701 units (Domestic 50,201 units and exports 13, 500 units) in April 2024, posting a YOY growth of 9.5%. HMIL's domestic sales, however, grew by just 1% YoY to 50,201 units last month.

"In the first month of the new financial year, it looks like industry sales grew about 1.5%. This is because of the high base of the last two years.

EXPRESS READ

SC registry refuses to accept plea by GOI on allocation of spectrum

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court's registry has refused to accept a plea filed by the central government to allow the administrative allocation of spectrum in some special cases, in a departure from 2012 2G spectrum judgment. Registrar Pavanesh D said the plea is "misconceived" as the government sought a review of the 2012 order "in the guise" of seeking clarifications and there was no "reasonable cause" for entertaining the plea and that too after a long period of time. *ENS*

Adani Power reported 48% decline in Q4 net profit at ₹2,737 crore

NEW DELHI: Adani Power on Wednesday reported a 47.78% fall in its consolidated net profit to ₹2,737.24 crore for March quarter on account of increased expenses. Net profit was ₹5,242.48 crore in January-March period of preceding 2022-23, the company said in an exchange filing. During the Q4FY24, total income was ₹13,881.52 crore against ₹10,795.32 crore a year ago. Expenses stood at ₹10,323.58 crore in the period under review as against ₹9,897.60 crore in the year-ago period. *ENS*

Commercial LPG cylinder price cut ₹19, ATF up 0.7%

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

STATE-owned oil marketing companies (OMCs) on Wednesday reduced price of commercial LPG cylinders, used by businesses such as hotels and restaurants, by ₹19 with immediate effect.

The price of a 19-kg commercial LPG cylinder will cost ₹1,745.50 in Delhi. In April, the price of the same cylinder was reduced by ₹30.5. However, there is no change in the price of the domestic LPG cylinder. But OMCs such as Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL), and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) hiked aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices by 0.7%. As per the price notification, ATF price in Delhi has been raised by ₹749.25 per kilolitre to ₹101,642.88 per kl.

Earlier this year, on February 1 and March 1, commercial LPG prices had risen by ₹14 and ₹25.5 per cylinder, respectively, before the first reduction on April 1. The OMCs revise ATF and LPG prices on the first day of every month based on international fuel prices and exchange rates. In March, domestic cooking gas prices were cut by ₹100 and extended ₹300 subsidy for LPG cylinders for Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana beneficiaries .

Questions over Adani bid for Coastal Energen

DIPAK MONDAL @ New Delhi

FORMER promoter of Chennai-based power company Coastal Energen Pvt Ltd has moved NCLT against the resolution plan submitted by the Consortium of Dickey Alternate Investment Trust (DAIT) and Adani Power Ltd.

The plea submitted by suspended director MK Parmeshawaram in the Chennai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has pointed out 'glaring irregularities' in the way the resolution plan was approved by the lenders. A copy of the plea is with the New Indian Express.

The ₹3,500 crore resolution plan has been approved by lenders of Coastal Energen, and is due for approval by the NCLT.

According to the plea filed by the promoters of the power company before the NCLT, Adani Power piggy-backed Dickey Alternate Investment Trust to get a back-door entry into the bidding process after the Adani's expression of interest (EoI) was rejected by the resolution professional (RP) for delayed submission.

As per the plea, the EoI terms required any entity submitting an EoI as a consortium to do so at the outset, submitting the required documents and annexures as a consortium and not in an individual capacity.

"This raised the questions about the legitimacy of DAIT's involvement in a consortium with Adani Power, especially since DAIT has already submitted a resolution plan in its individual capacity, and the Adani Power's EoI had been rejected for delayed submission," reads the plea submitted by the former promoter.

The submission made by the promoter also highlights that there are no documented deliberations or discussions between the RP and the lenders regarding the inclusion of Adani Power as prospective resolution applicant. It also says no justifications were given for condoning the delay in submission of EoI by Adani Power.

The plea made by the ex-promoter also points fingers at the possible conflict of interest 'undisclosed' by the RP and the Committee of Creditors (CoC).

An Adani Power spokesperson refused to comment on the issue. It must be pointed out here that the ex-promoters of the company had offered a one-time settlement of debt with the lenders. The offer included a total payment of Rs 5,847 crore, including 15% ownership of the company to its lenders to settle its debts. Coastal Energen is promoted by Ahmed AR Buhari, and is undergoing a corporate insolvency resolution process since February 2022. The company owes ₹2,000 crore to different lenders.

Maha controls 41% of ₹55 lakh cr MF AUM; Delhi's share at 8.4%

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Mumbai

THE dominance of Maharashtra continued unabated with its share in assets under management touching a tad less than 41% in March, mutual fund body Amfi data showed on Wednesday.

The next top four states' contribution is a little over half of this western state, which rose from ₹22.41 lakh crore in February this year to ₹22.52 lakh crore in March. With Maharashtra controlling nearly 40.93% of the industry, the top 5 states corner 68% of the market that has 44 fund houses with a combined AUM of ₹55.01 lakh crore as of March, as per an analysis of the state-wise spilt of mutual fund investments.

The next four are New Delhi at 8.41%, Karnataka at 6.92%, Gujarat at 6.89% and Bengal at 5.20%. During the past fiscal the MF industry grew 37%, taking the assets under management to ₹55.01 lakh crore, driven by the massive inflows into open-ended equity schemes, which clipped past 10% in March to ₹22,633 crore from ₹20,534 crore in March 2023.

Despite the industry notching up 37% more in FY24, as many as five of the 37 states and Union Territories saw a sequential decline in AUM in March as against just two in February. Andhra, Goa, Kerala, the Lakshadweep and Sikkim saw sequential declines in the reporting month with the Lakshadweep seeing the highest contraction of 57.90%, followed by Sikkim at 3.22% and Kerala at 0.59%.

Interestingly, the top 5 states in terms of sequential growth are Daman & Diu, Manipur, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Meghalaya, and Tripura. The Union Territory of Daman & Diu saw the highest sequential growth at 3.60% followed by Manipur at 3.09% and Dadra & Nagar Haveli at 2.62%.

Equity-oriented schemes continued to get the maximum share from all the states for third consecutive month contributing the most towards AUM at 51.96%.

KABIL, CSIR-NGRI MoU to advance geophysical investigations

Bhubaneswar: Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research - National Geophysical Research Institute (CSIR-NGRI) to foster a long-term collaboration in the field of geophysical investigations to bolster its ongoing projects and activities in critical and strategic minerals. The MoU was signed by Sadashiv Samantaray, Director (Commercial), NALCO & CEO, KABIL and Dr. Prakash Kumar, Director, CSIR-NGRI, in presence of Sridhar Patra, CMD, NALCO & Chairman, KABIL, at NALCO Corporate Office in Bhubaneswar. This collaboration will focus on Geophysical, Geochemical and Geological surveys, data analysis, interpretation and modelling, scientific knowledge sharing, technical support and advisory services.

Business & Beyond

PPL bags prestigious 'Best Annual Report Award'

Paradeep Phosphates Limited (PPL) once again recognized for its efforts for practicing Best Corporate Governance, Timely Complaince submission and registertering Financial Data and figures in an Investor Friendly Manner. PPL conferred with this prestigious THE FREE PRESS JOURNAL- BEST ANNUAL REPORT AWARDS for the Financial Year 2023. Mr. Bijoy Kumar Biswal, Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Sudhi Ranjan Mishra, Head-Corporate Affairs and Mr. SushnatoLahiri, DGM-Corporate Strategy received the Award from Mr. M. Damodaran, Ex- Chairman, SEBI in a glittering function at Bay Club, Mumbai on 26th April '24.

Tata Motors Limited launches Intra V70 in Bhubaneswar

Tata Motors Limited, India's most valued Commercial vehicle company, launched its 5th offering in Intra range after successful adoption of v10/v20/v30/&v50 in Bhubaneswar. A state-wide roll-out is underway. An unrelenting focus on product performance, reliability and an accessible and affordable after-sales network has made Tata the brand of Choice. Tata pioneered last mile transportation and fulfilled the aspirations of generations of Indians. With its new launch, the company is introducing its valued customers to the next phase of profitable mobility. The new vehicles are designed to deliver high performance onrange, load-carrying ability, gradeability and are designed to be durable. Diptesh Subba, Area Manager-Odisha , said: "We are delighted to present the new Intra v70.

Red Bull CTO Newey to step down from F1 team

Adrian Newey, the designer pivotal in Red Bull's dominance of F1, will step down next year, the team said. Newey will end his near two-decade career with Red Bull in the 'first quarter of 2025." "For almost two decades it has been my great honour to have played a key role in Red Bull Racing's progress from upstart newcomer to multiple title-winning team," he said.

WHO IS GOING TO BE INDIA'S DESIGNATED FINISHER IN WC?

One of the big loopholes in the squad of 15, as it stands, is the lack of a finisher; also a top-heavy line-up could prevent them from targetting a specific match-up

GOMESH S @ Chennai

AS Ajinkya Rahane holed out to Punjab Kings' Rilee Russouw off Harpreet Brar in the eight over and took the long walk back at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Wednesday evening, Chennai Super Kings did something they don't always do.

The home team sent out Shivam Dube, their designated spin-hitter, at No. 3. Usually, they promote Ravindra Jadeja, but here, on a red soil pitch, they knew spinners would do well and wanted Dube to make an impact. While the left-hander might have gotten out for a first-ball duck, the significant point to note here is that CSK had the option and the luxury of using it as an entry point for Dube.

Come the T20 World Cup next month, what will the Indian team do in such a situation? As the BCCI announced their 15-member squad on Tuesday, it is a question that remains. Yes, Dube has made the squad, but he might not necessarily start.

Unless they opt to play both Axar Patel and Jadeja, India are likely to have the latter at No. 7 followed by their four bowlers. And it unfortunately leaves them where they were a year ago. Rishabh Pant at No. 5, Hardik Pandya at 6 and then comes Jadeja who has batted only twice in T20Is since last the WC.

Now, this middle-order (accounting 5-7 because Suryakumar Yadav is fixed at 4) has not given much success, especially when under pressure. To put this into context, India's No. 5-7 operated at an average of 30.3 while striking at 147.8 between 2021 and the 2022 T20 World Cups. Their leading finisher in that phase was Pandya (37.45 and 149.27). Dinesh Karthik, who was used as a designated finisher, comes next on the list. In the year since the 2022 T20 WC, the numbers do not look very different. The No. 5-7 have operated at an average of 28.9 while striking at 144.5 but with the transition they tried to implement before going back, not many batters have had the opportunity to stand out. Except one — Rinku Singh. In 11 batting innings, Rinku has hit 356 runs (the highest among India's No. 5-7; 89 and 176.23). But he does not have a place in the 15-member squad. Hardik comes next on the list, but his 114.9 doesn't look good. Axar has a SR of 157.02, and Dube, in the three matches, has an SR of 134.28, but both might not necessarily start. And if they do start, the team management would be expecting Jadeja, one of Axar/Dube, and Hardik to complete eight overs.

INDIA'S CUMULATIVE MIDDLE-ORDER (5-7) RECORD

WC cycle	Runs	AVG	SR
2021-22	1365	30.33	147.8
2022-Present	1159	28.9	144.51

While it is not necessarily clear how the conditions will be in the USA, strips may be on the slower side in the West Indies. And with the top five fixed — Rohit Sharma, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar and Pant — it becomes all the more harder for India to be flexible or take down a specific bowling type if an opportunity presents like Chennai identified on Wednesday. Pant, who has come back from a life-threatening injury, has proven himself in the IPL, but he bats in the top four for Delhi Capitals. Sanju Samson, the other wicketkeeper-batter who can smash spinners, also bats in the top three in the IPL. Perhaps, the only player who has a designated role as finisher is Rinku but he is in the reserves. At a time when teams are as flexible as possible with match-ups in the shortest format, India might not have given themselves the best chance by leaving him out.

Not all is over though. Teams still have an option of making changes to their squads till May 25. Whether India will bring back Rinku in place of someone is yet to be seen (for what it's worth, they have exercised this option before). For now, there are many questions, some of which might be answered at the press conference in Mumbai on Thursday.

ALL-ROUNDER MARSH TO LEAD AUSTRALIA

Mitchell Marsh was named as Australia's captain for the upcoming T20 World Cup in the US and West Indies. In a squad filled with ICC match-winners across all three formats, the one surprising omission is that of Jake Fraser-McGurk, the opener who has taken to the Indian Premier League (IPL) like a duck to water. **Squad:** Mitchell Marsh (capt), Ashton Agar, Pat Cummins, Tim David, Nathan Ellis, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Glenn Maxwell, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis, Matthew Wade, David Warner, Adam Zampa.

Arsh night for Singh a day after WC selection

ANMOL GURUNG @ Chennai

ARSHDEEP Singh has been generous to batters more often than he would have liked so far this season in the IPL. Though the left-arm pacer has retained his habit of taking wickets, he has been leaking runs as batters have figured out methods to counter his bowling.

After being included in the T20 World Cup squad on Tuesday, he would have hoped to change that trend and start afresh.

Punjab pacer Arshdeep Singh finished with 1/52 on Wednesday | SPORTZPICS

With Punjab Kings locking horns with Chennai Super Kings 24 hours later, it was always expected to be a stiff challenge for Arshdeep and the rest of the bowlers. Moreover, Arshdeep was going to be up against Ruturaj Gaikwad, who's having a swell season with the willow so far.

After PBKS opted to bat first, that battle materialised soon. Bowling the second over of the contest in Chennai, Arshdeep started with two dots. But things changed soon as the in-form Gaikwad took charge of the proceedings. Change of ends didn't help either, as he was dispatched for three fours in the fifth over.

After a subdued show with the new ball, Arshdeep would have hoped for an improved narrative when he was recalled into the attack in the 18th over.

However, bad turned to worse as he started with a wide (dew and pressure could have been some of the factors). There was more pain in store as Moeen Ali, the batter at the crease, smashed him for a six (that was just the third six of the innings at that time) in the next ball. That six was followed by a four immediately. Two more wides followed before he finally got the wicket of Gaikwad, who scored 62 off 48 balls, with a yorker outside leg stump.

MS Dhoni's arrival didn't help Arshdeep's case as the former captain hit him for a four and a six in the final over.

Punjab, thanks mainly to spinners Harpreet Brar and Rahul Chahar, did well to restrict Chennai to 162/7. Arshdeep has earned a fair share of credits for his performances in the last few years.

Afterall, he is the second-fastest Indian to reach 50 T20I wickets (33 matches) and he is in the World Cup team on merit. Even after conceding 52 runs in his four overs, he will be hopeful of putting up better numbers in the days to come..

All-round Punjab thrash Super Kings in Chepauk

Punjab Kings spinner Rahul Chahar celebrates the wicket of Chennai Super Kings' Ravindra Jadeja at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Wednesday | SPORTZPICS

ASHOK VENUGOPAL @ Chennai

RIDING on Jonny Bairstow's 46 and Rilee Rossouw's 43, Punjab Kings defeated Chennai Super Kings by seven wickets in an IPL match played at the MA Chidambaram Stadium here on Wednesday.

Chasing 163 for a win, Punjab had a disastrous start as they lost Prabhsimran Singh cheaply. Later Bairstow and Rossouw did the rescue act. Bairstow was aggressive of the duo and scored runs at a steady clip, attacking the right ball. He was at ease against all the CSK bowlers. With Deepak Chahar pulling out after bowling two balls due to strain or pull, CSK were a bowler short and thus they employed Shivam Dube. This move turned out to pay rich dividends as Dube removed the well settled Bairstow. But Dube's joy was short lived as in the very same over Rossouw carted him for a huge six and a boundary to take the visitors close to the 100-run mark.

As Rossouw was slowly marching towards his 50 and also trying to guide his side close to the target he was castled by Shardul Thakur, done in by change of pace.

Earlier, Ruturaj Gaikwad's valuable 62 came in handy for Chennai Super Kings to post 162/7 in 20 overs against Punjab Kings at the MA Chidambaram stadium here on Wednesday. Put into bat first, CSK could not get going as the ball was not coming on to the bat. Gaikwad who is in fine touch began in style, executing a copy book square drive off Arshdeep Singh where the ball raced to the fence. A few balls later, he went for an upper cut to notch up another boundary at the expense of Arshdeep and left the crowd thrilled with his innovative shot. However during the power play, Chennai managed to make only 55 runs.

Once spin was introduced, run-making became even more harder with Ajinkya Rahane getting out to Harpreet Brar for runs. Chennai promoted Shivam Dube, but he too fell in the same over for a first-ball duck. Brar induced Rahane to play an ambitious shot and the former India captain holed out to Russouw at deep mid wicket. Later Shivam Dube went for a big sweep and missed the line by Brar to be adjudged leg before. At 65 for 2 CSK were under immense pressure and the think tank of the host decided to send Ravindra Jadeja to stabilise the innings, but that was not to be. Before Jadeja could settle down, Chahar trapped him right in front. From thereon, Sam Curran rotated Brar and Rahul Chahar to put the brakes on CSK. Impact sub Sameer Rizvi joined Ruturaj and was all at sea against the pace of Rabada. He and Gaikwad could not hit boundaries for almost nine overs. Both Chahar and Brar completed their quota of overs without conceding one as well.

Brief scores: Chennai Super Kings 162/7 in 20 ovs (Ruturaj 62, Rahane 29; Chahar 2/16, Brar 2/17) **lost to** Punjab Kings 163/3 in 17.5 ovs (Bairstow 46, Rossouw 43).

Ireland's Gaby Lewis & Amy Hunter in action during the T20 World Cup qualifier | ICC

Keeper Amy credits Ireland management and captain for success

KALYANI MANGALE @ Chennai

SINCE her debut as a 15-year-old batter, Ireland's Amy Hunter has been in the headlines. At one time it was about breaking Mithali Raj's record of the youngest player to score an ODI century. Earlier this year, she became the first Ireland player to score centuries in both white-ball formats. Since her debut in 2021, Hunter has grown into one of the most important players for her side and the wicket-keeper-batter knows where the credit should go.

"I probably got off quite a slow start for Ireland," Hunter told this daily ahead of the Women's T20 World Cup qualifier. "I debuted in the Scotland series and probably didn't do it as well as I would have liked. I've grown into (the role) and then it is the support from the management. They've backed me and given me a role within the team which has helped me. I know what I'm trying to do and they back me up even if it doesn't come off. Across the board, they've told me to go out and be as aggressive as I can within a reason and then if that doesn't come off that's okay. We have talked about having clear plans and going after the bowlers. I think it is a credit to the management and captain specifically," she added.

Since her debut in May 2021, Hunter has been the second-highest run-scorer for Ireland after Gaby Lewis. Captain Laura Delany is aware of how important Hunter is for Ireland right now, but she also believes that with this experience behind her back, she going to be the powerhouse for Ireland in the coming years. "It is an incredibly exciting time for Ireland cricket right now to see these young players show no fear whatsoever while playing such aggressive and attacking cricket in this format. They are not scared of doing it against the best sides in the world. It is a great place to be in. (Players like Hunter) have so much time to learn about their game and gain that experience. To see what they are doing right now is incredible for us," Delany mentioned.

In a way the young generation of Irish players is lucky as they have received professional contracts which allows them to concentrate on their cricket as early as they want. Hunter is a beneficiary of those contracts. "As a group of players, we're so lucky that we do have the contracts now because there are probably generations of players that have gone past had to work a job alongside essentially playing full-time cricket. I think we're hugely fortunate to actually have that opportunity now and even for people a lot younger than myself, they can grow up knowing that there is a job in cricket if that's what they want to do," she added.

With all this behind her back, Hunter has only one aim for now," to qualify for the T20 World Cup." And looking at their performance in the qualifiers, Ireland are closing on that spot.

Coach attacked, Chhatrasal vacated

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

HOURS after a coach was allegedly hit with a heavy piece of wood (a kitchen utensil used to prepare badam ragda, a protein shake) while he was asleep in his room along with his son at the iconic Chhatrasal Stadium, the Delhi government has asked the trainee wrestlers to vacate the hostel on Wednesday. Wrestlers use the said piece of wood or pestle to crush and grind almonds to prepare the energy drink for them. Sources told this daily that a disgruntled trainee wrestler against whom the coach had lodged a protest attacked the latter on Tuesday night.

"All the trainee wrestlers have been asked to leave the hostel with immediate effect," a source in the know of the development told this daily. However, three wrestlers, who are scheduled to compete in the World Olympic Games Qualifier later this month, have been allowed to stay at their respective rooms and continue their preparations for the last qualifying event. The three wrestlers are Aman Sehrawat (57kg), Deepak Punia (86kg) and Sumit Malik (125kg).

"The coach received 40 stitches as he sustained severe injuries in his head. He also sustained facial injuries," added the source. But it could not be ascertained whether an FIR was registered against the accused. Notably, in 2021, the two-time Olympic medallist Sushil Kumar was arrested for allegedly being involved in the death of a wrestler at the stadium. He is currently lodged in the jail.

Sunrisers seek Royal comeback

AFTER CONSECUTIVE LOSSES, SUNRISERS HYDERABAD TAKE ON RAJASTHAN ROYALS IN HYDERABAD. A LOOK...

HEAD VS BOULT

Trent Boult has been one of the best new ball bowlers& he will be up against Travis Head, one of the best openers this IPL, on Thursday. How Head, and Abhishek Sharma, go in the powerplay could decide the game.

SANDEEP VS NATARAJAN

Two death bowlers, both have a point to prove. Having missed out on the T20 World Cup berth, Sandeep Sharma and T Natarajan would be itching to put on a show, especially going up against each other. Can they?

EYES ON JAISWAL

Although Yashasvi Jaiswal has one century this season for Rajasthan and has sealed the place in the T20 World Cup squad, the youngster would want to get more runs under his belt.

Sunrisers Hyderabad **vs** Rajasthan Royals, Hyderabad

Live on Star Sports and JioCinema, 7.30PM

EXPRESS READ

Chennaiyin extend Samik's contract

CHENNAI: Indian super League side Chennaiyin FC has extended goalkeeper Samik Mitra's contract till end of 2027 season, the club announced on Wednesday. Mitra joined the Marina Machans from Indian Arrows in 2020 and has played a total of 22 matches for the team in all competitions, keeping clean sheets in three games. The 23-year-old goalkeeper from Siliguri has become a force to be reckoned with and has played a crucial role in the team's success.

Four Indian boxers march into semi-finals

ASTANA: Indian pugilists Aryan, Yashwardhan Singh, Priyanshu and Sahil marched into the semi-finals with confident wins at the ASBC Asian U-22 & Youth Boxing Championships here on Wednesday. Aryan gave India a perfect start with a 5-0 unanimous decision win against Uzbekistan's Juraev Shakarboy in the 51kg category. His win was followed by a good show by Yashwardhan (63.5kg), who registered a 4-1 victory over Iran's Mirahmadi Babaheidari.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Vinicius double helps Real in thrilling draw against Bayern

AFP @Munich

REAL Madrid forward Vinicius Junior scored a double, including an 83rd-minute equalising penalty, to snatch a 2-2 draw at Bayern Munich on Tuesday that puts the Spanish side in the driving seat for the return leg of the Champions League semi-final. Vinicius gave Real the lead after 24 minutes of the first leg but Bayern scored twice in four second-half minutes to wrestle back control, Leroy Sane with a stunning opener and Harry Kane converting a penalty. Kim Min-jae fouled Rodrygo in the box with eight minutes remaining and Vinicius stepped up, drowning out a chorus of boos and whistles to blast home. "In this competition it's important not to lose, and we're here because we haven't lost yet," said Vinicius.

Real Madrid's Vinicius Junior celebrates his goal against Bayern Munich | AFP

"I'm very happy that I was able score two goals, and now we need to have a magical night at home," he added.

The draw makes Madrid favourites to progress in next week's return leg at the Santiago Bernabeu but Bayern, who dominated large parts of the match, will still have hope of making it to the final at Wembley in June. "It's a good result for the second leg," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said. "But nothing has been decided yet. "Bayern have high quality. They have players like Musiala or Sane who can hurt us."

Famed for their composure on the biggest of stages in this competition, 14-time winners Real struggled early on as Bayern dominated possession while spurred on by a ferocious home crowd.Sane had a chance after just 40 seconds and another minutes later, while Kane chipped a shot from halfway just over the bar as the visitors struggled to cope.

Bhutan's *Department of Tourism* has decided to abolish the mandatory travel insurance requirement for visa applications.

To combat over tourism, Venice becomes the first city to charge day-trippers an entry fee of ₹445 to visit its canals and monuments.

RIVERINE RENDEZVOUS

River cruises in India have seen a surge in popularity due to growing interest in experiential travel and the desire to explore off-the-beaten-path destinations and we list the routes one shouldn't miss...

SRUSHTI KULKARNI

AMONGST the rising travel trends in the country, river cruise tourism has emerged as a popular choice in India thanks to its flexibility for allowing travellers to explore the country's diverse landscapes, vibrant cultures and rich history from a different perspective. Moreover, river cruises in India are known for their small and intimate nature, allowing passengers to enjoy a more personalised experience and creating a sense of community among passengers. This mode of vacation allows travellers to explore different destinations without the hassle of packing and unpacking, waking up to new locations each day. The itineraries are designed to balance activities with free time, allowing passengers to indulge in peaceful solitude. The trend was further exemplified by the recent collaboration between the *Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board*, the *Government of Gujarat* and the *Inland Waterways Authority of India* — leading to the introduction of floating jetties to experience the Narmada River. Other recent announcements include dolphin-watching cruises off the Okha coast and cruises on the Sarayu River in Ayodhya. Besides the famous Ganga and Yamuna cruises, we bring you five must-experience riverine destinations across India.

MANDOVI RIVER CRUISE

Departing from the Santa Monica Jetty in Panaji, the cruise takes passengers on a leisurely journey along the Mandovi River. As the cruise meanders through the serene surroundings, passengers can enjoy stunning views of the Goan coastline, lush greenery and historic buildings along the riverbanks. Experience the beauty of the Mandovi River in Goa with a thrilling speedboat ride to spot dolphins. Alternatively, opt for a relaxing sunset cruise aboard a two-deck boat, where you can enjoy live DJ music, a dance floor and mesmerising views of Goa. Delight in Goa sightseeing from the water and be entertained by lively Goan folk dances.

CHILIKA LAKE CRUISE

Odisha's Barkul Chilika now hosts the state's first luxury cruise houseboat, offering guests a lavish experience amidst the stunning beauty of Chilika Lake. The houseboat by Vikash Eco Resorts boasts six bedrooms with luxurious amenities, including four premium rooms and two suite rooms. Named Garuda, the 105-foot-long, 22-foot-wide vessel is equipped with dual engines and designed to navigate the climatic conditions of Chilika. Guests can enjoy a 24-hour package that includes an overnight stay, full board meals, activities and cruising to explore the vibrant marine ecology of Asia's largest lake. The houseboat features two floors, with a bar and restaurant and an open-air lobby on the upper deck, providing a luxurious and immersive experience in the heart of nature.

GODAVARI RIVER CRUISE

The picturesque Papi Kondalu range, visible from Koruturu in West Godavari District, gets its name from its resemblance to a well-designed partition that divides the Godavari River. Located near Rajahmundry in Andhra Pradesh, these hills offer a scenic journey that begins with an eight-hour boat ride. The boats leave from Polavaram and cover a distance of 130km en route a Shiva Temple at Pattiseema. The Mahanandiswara Swamy Temple housing a crystal Shiva *linga* is also located on an island nearby. The final destination is the *Papikondalu National Park*, where one can witness a majestic waterfall.

ANTARA LUXURY RIVER CRUISES

Setting sail from Varanasi to Dibrugarh via Dhaka, this 18-suite ship promises the longest and most picturesque journey in the world. Over 50 days, guests will traverse through two countries, five states and an impressive 27 river systems. The vessel is adorned with Varanasi's Himalayan Buddhist Gyasar textiles, the elegance of Indian teak furniture, handmade tiles and wooden hallways. With a delicious food and beverage menu showcasing the specialties of the land each day, guests will also have the opportunity to explore off-shore experiences guided by an in-house expert.

BRAHMAPUTRA RIVER CRUISE

Operating between October and April, the MV Rudra Singha (vessel) offers a unique exploration of Assam spanning wildlife encounters to temples and tea gardens, including walks through tiny villages. This 10-night journey begins at a river *ghat* between Jorhat and Dibrugarh, culminating at Guwahati. Along the way, passengers visit the old capital of the Ahom kings at Sibsagar; Majuli Island with its Hindu monasteries and temples at Tezpur and Madan Kamdev. For those combining the package with the four-night cruise starting at Guwahati and ending at Silghat, they can also delve into this northeast Indian state's silk-weaving heritage, learn about sericulture in village homes, culminating at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of *Kaziranga National Park*, renowned for its rhinos and tigers.

How GenZ likes to travel: new report reveals all...

Indian Gen Z craves unique adventures, cultural immersion and peer-approved solo trips abroad, the dossier reveals...

SUBHASHINI RAMASAMY

IN recent years, a thirst for adventure and exploration, commonly called wanderlust, has gripped younger generations. This desire to travel and immerse oneself in new cultures has become a defining characteristic for many. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, with its unprecedented restrictions on movement, closed curtains on international travel. Confined to their homes, young people's yearning to explore the world intensified, with solo trips emerging as a particularly attractive option.

As things have returned to normalcy, *Skyscanner*'s new report reveals that half of India's Gen Z population, nearly 47 percent, are planning leisure trips abroad, without their parents or guardians, with 81 percent choosing to embark on their first overseas adventure after landing their first job or receiving their first pay check.

The report also highlights the patterns observed among young Indian travellers. Around 46 percent of them were inspired to travel overseas to experience concerts, sports events and other cultural events. 51 percent look at travel as something that can help them break free while immersing in new cultures. Interestingly, social media is not the main source of travel inspiration for Gen Z. More than half feel confident about travelling only after getting the green light from close friends or family.

These young adventurers also seem to be planners. Most prefer a detailed itinerary for their first solo trip abroad. While they book round-trip flights and accommodations, affordability remains a concern. Over half prioritise budget-friendly options. However, safety trumps all. A whopping 63 percent are willing to spend a little more to feel secure. This desire for balance extends to destinations — 59 percent opt for popular destinations, offering the comfort of familiarity alongside exploration. It is no surprise that Europe emerges as a fan favourite, with over 40 percent listing it as their top destination and nearly half having their hearts set on the United Kingdom. With Indian Gen Z ready to explore, experience new cultures and create memories that will last a lifetime, the travel industry is definitely in for an exciting ride.

INDIA'S FIRST ASTRO TOURISM CAMPAIGN, ANNOUNCED!

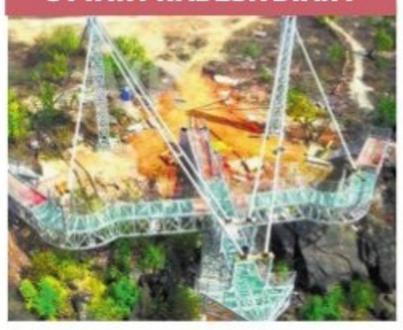
SRUSHTI KULKARNI

The campaign aims to raise awareness and create volunteers and dark sky ambassadors for the preservation of dark skies, benefiting local communities economically...

UTTARAKHAND Tourism Development Board, in collaboration with Starscapes, a prominent astro tourism company, announced the launch of *Nakshatra Sabha* this week. This unique initiative promises a holistic Astro Tourism experience, featuring activities such as stargazing, special solar observations, astrophotography contests, camping under the stars and much more. The Secretary of Tourism, *Government of Uttarakhand*, expressed enthusiasm about the campaign, stating, "Uttarakhand has tremendous potential to become the go-to destination for all things related to astronomy-focused travel. With its large forest cover, nature-based tourism, easy access to major cities and a well-developed hospitality sector, including Home Stays, Uttarakhand is uniquely positioned to attract Astro Tourists. Our aim is to invite visitors from across the globe to experience the magic of the universe while giving them a glimpse into the state's unique heritage." Scheduled to commence in early June at George Everest, Mussoorie, *Nakshatra Sabha* will run until mid-2025, offering a series of immersive events at various locations throughout Uttarakhand. These events will cover potential dark sky sites in districts such as Uttarkashi, Pithoragarh, Nainital and Chamoli, in addition to seminars and webinars with experts. This initiative aims to bring together astronomy enthusiasts, adventurers and travellers from across the globe to witness the beauty of the cosmos. Moreover, the campaign offers professional training and skill development opportunities to local residents, aiming to enhance local economies. It will advocate for the preservation of dark skies, fostering a community of ambassadors dedicated to promoting dark sky conservation efforts throughout Uttarakhand. This includes formulating a dark sky preservation policy and implementing it region-wide over the course of the year. Starscapes will collaborate actively with local communities, travel and tourism partners and homestay communities, providing training and ongoing support to ensure the successful implementation of these initiatives.

Key highlights of *Nakshatra Sabha* include stargazing through specialised equipment, expert talks on Astro tourism by renowned leaders from the travel industry and academia, an astrophotography contest and special solar observations. The campaign aims to raise awareness and create volunteers and dark sky ambassadors for the preservation of dark skies, benefiting local communities economically immensely.

UTTAR PRADESH DIARY



UP to unveil a unique glass skywalk in Chitrakoot

The *Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department* is set to unveil the first glass skywalk bridge in the picturesque Chitrakoot district. Positioned at the Tulsi Waterfalls site, this 25m bow-and-arrow-shaped bridge offers visitors a breathtaking view of the Chitrakoot forest and the cascading waters below. The skywalk, designed to bear a load capacity of 500kg per square metre, is a symbol of strength and valour, inspired by the weapons of Lord Ram. The surrounding area, now known as Kodand Van, has been transformed into a lush forest, providing a serene retreat amidst nature. Additionally, plans are in place to develop a park, a herbal garden and several restaurants around the area.

Vrindavan to get world's first skyscraper temple

Another remarkable project underway in Uttar Pradesh is the Chandrodaya Mandir, a 70-storey skyscraper temple in Vrindavan, dedicated to Lord Krishna and Radha. Also known as the Vrindavan Heritage Tower, this monumental structure is set to become a landmark in the holy city. With a construction cost of approximately ₹668 crore, the temple will offer top-notch facilities, including multi-level parking and hundreds of luxurious hotel rooms. It will have the capacity to accommodate around 2,00,000 people daily. The complex will also house a museum and *goshala*.

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THURSDAY

DAY'S DIARY

MCU movie releases

On this day in 2008, *Iron Man*, the first film and installment in the Marvel Cinematic Universe was released in theatres across the world

THE CAST

The film is directed by Jon Favreau and stars Robert Downey Jr as Tony Stark aka Iron Man, Terrence Howard as James Rhodes, and Gwyneth Paltrow as Pepper Potts

AVENGERS

The first *Iron Man* movie ended with a post-credits scene in which Nick Fury dropped by to inform Tony Stark about the Avengers Initiative

TRIVIA

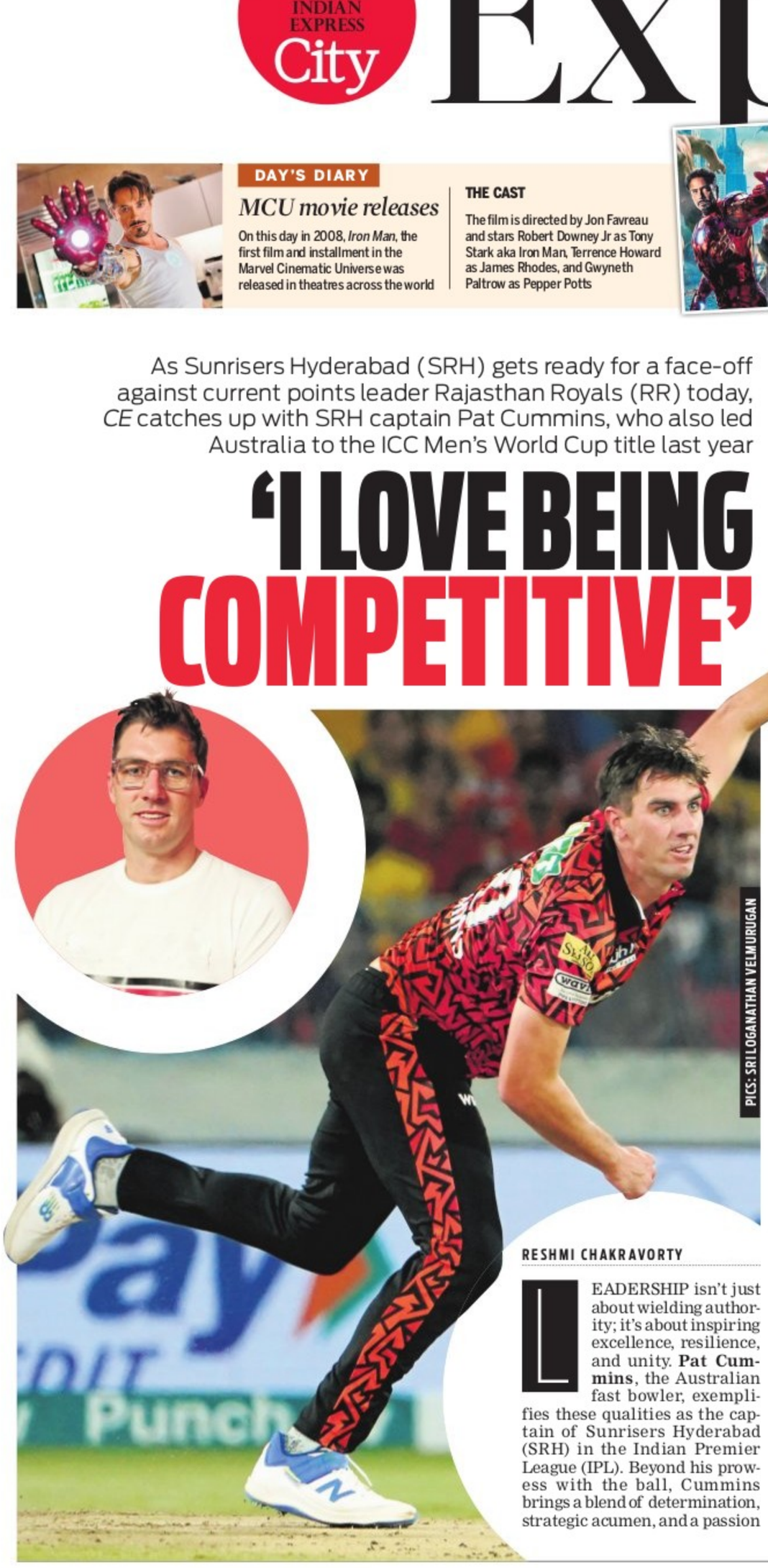
Downey wasn't the first choice to play Iron Man when Favreau fought for him back in the day as he was coming off of a well-publicised career downfall

A curated guide to happenings in the city

PG 2

As Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) gets ready for a face-off against current points leader Rajasthan Royals (RR) today, *CE* catches up with SRH captain Pat Cummins, who also led Australia to the ICC Men's World Cup title last year

'I LOVE BEING COMPETITIVE'



PICS: SRI LOGANATHAN VELMURUGAN

RESHMI CHAKRAVORTY

LEADERSHIP isn't just about wielding authority; it's about inspiring excellence, resilience, and unity. **Pat Cummins**, the Australian fast bowler, exemplifies these qualities as the captain of Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) in the Indian Premier League (IPL). Beyond his prowess with the ball, Cummins brings a blend of determination, strategic acumen, and a passion for the game that elevates him as a leader in the fiercely competitive world of T20 cricket.

Cummins' journey to cricketing stardom is a testament to his unwavering dedication and talent. Known for his fiery pace and precision, Cummins has been a formidable force on the cricket pitch since his debut. His ability to generate pace consistently, coupled with his knack for breaking partnerships, has earned him accolades and admiration worldwide. When SRH entrusted Cummins with the captaincy, it was a decision grounded not just in his cricketing prowess but also in his leadership qualities. Despite being relatively new to the role of captain, Cummins embraced the challenge with characteristic determination. His calm demeanour under pressure and astute decision-making on the field has earned him respect from teammates and opponents alike. *CE* caught up with Cummins ahead of a big fixture today against Rajasthan Royals. **Excerpts**:

Tell us about your experience of being the SRH skipper.
It's been great. My first year with Hyderabad, lots of new guys I hadn't met before this season who have been great fun. They've been playing awesome cricket off the field, the whole franchise has been amazing and the fans have been great too.

Does having a competitive spirit help in leading the team from the front?
Yes, I think it helps me as a player. Leading is probably up to other people to say, but I think so. I always try to have that mentality that there's going to be one person that's the 'Man of the Match' or there's going to be one team that wins. So that might as well be us (grins).

The last couple of matches were not in SRH's favour. Where do you think things went wrong and what can be done?
Not much went right the last couple of games. The good thing is only two games before that we won four games in a row and we're playing really good cricket. So, it's the same guys. Just that the game hasn't gone well the last two matches. It's about how we bounce back. We don't need to change too much at all. We're back in a venue that we know really well.

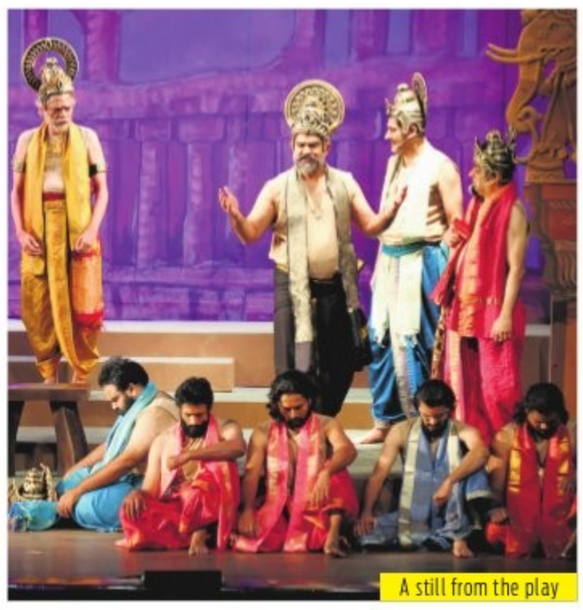
What's your story behind becoming a cricketer?
Just the love of the game. First of all, I've got a couple older brothers. So, I was always playing backyard cricket with them and I come from a big, sporty family. I love being competitive. I love being that younger brother trying to take the game on and be competitive, even with people who are older than me. I never thought I'd become a professional cricketer, but here I am.

Apart from cricket, what other interests do you have?
I've got a two-year-old son. My wife and I are very busy chasing him around. That feels like it takes up about 99 per cent of my life.

What else do you like about India?
My family is here right now and the one thing that stands out for them, which you get used to, is the hospitality. Everyone's so welcoming and always wants to look after you. Love the Indian hospitality.

Indian hospitality is a lot about the food. How are you maintaining your fitness?
I try to only have one heavy meal a day or else I'd be big and I wouldn't be able to bowl. I'd be bowling off spin-offs!

Any message to upcoming cricketers?
You have to make sure you find a way to keep enjoying it. As a kid, I'd play every day in the backyard because I loved it. It wasn't because I thought I've got to do this for a career. It's always about the love of the game.



A still from the play

8 hours, 5 acts, 4 intervals

Acclaimed actor and director Prakash Belawadi brings alive his epic English stage adaptation of SL Bhyrappa's *Parva* - a realistic re-imagining of the *Mahabharata*

DESE GOWDA

FOR **Prakash Belawadi**, literature, especially in his mother tongue Kannada, holds a treasure trove of stories waiting to be transformed for the stage. "There's something special about taking a work from the page and giving it new life through theatre, film, or audio," he explains. "These stories become part of our living culture, not just something you have to pick up a book to experience," he adds. This vision led him to adapt Kannada writer SL Bhyrappa's seminal novel *Parva* into a magnum opus at Rangayana Mysore a few years ago. Later this month, an English language version of the adaptation will be staged in the city.

Often considered Bhyrappa's greatest work, *Parva* is a realistic retelling of the familiar story of the epic *Mahabharata*, eschewing the divine elements of the epic to focus on the psychological and ethical complexities of its characters. Women, often relegated to the margins of the *Mahabharata*, receive a powerful re-centering in the story. The conflicts between the Pandavas and the Kauravas are seen as more than a battle of good versus evil;it's about ambition, choices and their far-reaching consequences.

"The biggest challenge is managing expectations," Belawadi admits. "Think of how many times the *Mahabharata* has been adapted. Each interpretation is different. As a playwright, you take a suitable element of something larger and shape it for the stage, where the audience experiences it in real-time." Faced with the sheer magnitude of the source material, Belawadi has made bold choices with the adaptation. One such is casting a woman as Krishna. "Theatre allows for experimentation," he says, adding, "I wanted to highlight Krishna's compassionate qualities rather than aiming for a literal representation. Thankfully, audiences have embraced these creative choices."

The eight-hour-long play will be performed in five acts with four intervals. It features set design by art director Shashidhar Adapa, costumes by designer Sankeerthi Aipanjiguly with consultancy by fashion guru Prasad Bidapa.

(Parva will be staged at JN Tata Auditorium, CV Raman Road on May 11 & 12 at 10am. Tickets priced at ₹750 onwards on bookmyshow.com)

KNOW YOUR CITY

Arun Prasad, city-based history researcher, unravels interesting facts about Bengaluru in this weekly quiz series. So it's time for you to find out how familiar you are with the city, beyond its heritage buildings, IT parks and the pub culture.

THE QUIZ WILL BE PUBLISHED EVERYWEDNESDAY

Send answers to **bengalurucityexpress@gmail.com** with the subject line **'Know Your City Quiz'** Correct answers and names of first three respondents with right answers will be featured in *CE*.

THE RIGHT ANSWERS ARE

1) Bangalore Cantonment
2) Yelahanka
3) Nandi Halt Station

FIRST THREE TO GET IT RIGHT

1) M B Balasubramanyam
2) Abhay Prakash
3) Tejas Arun

FUSION ACT

Vian Saby Manuel Fernandes, along with his band, the Kerala-based Thaikkudam Bridge, put forth an electrifying performance for Bengalureans recently. The concert by Alive India was an effort to uplift next-gen musicians

CITY READ

Career institute declares results in JEE Main 2024

The National Testing Agency (NTA) has released the All-India Ranks for JEE Main 2024, with ALLEN South India celebrating significant success. Sainavaneet Mukund from ALLEN Bengaluru achieved the Karnataka State Topper title with a perfect score of 100 percentile, securing AIR 41. Additionally, two more ALLEN Bengaluru students ranked in the top 100. In total, 1,867 students from ALLEN South India qualified for JEE Advanced 2024. Shawn Thomas Koshy (AIR 100) says, "The habit of performing consistently every year in a chosen talent was due to my mentors."

Tech institute to offer scholarship for differently-abled students

The International Institute of Information Technology Bangalore (IIIT-B) has partnered with EnAble India to offer scholarships for disabled students admitted to the new Post Graduate Programme in Digital Product Design and Management (PGP-DPDM). These scholarships will fund tuition for up to five qualifying students who are admitted in 2024. The collaboration aims to enhance inclusivity in education with a programme that can equip students with comprehensive skills in digital product design and management. Dipesh Sutariya, CMD & co-founder of EnAble India, said, "Incorporating persons with disabilities in product design ensures that accessibility is part of the infrastructure rather than an afterthought." For more information, visit www.iiitb.ac.in

FRUITFUL ENGAGEMENT

British deputy high commissioner Chandru Iyer recently addressed a conundrum faced by James Godber – deputy head of mission, UK in Bengaluru, who went on to research all the mango varieties in Bengaluru along with Shalini Medepalli, deputy head of mission, UK in Chennai. With the numerous varieties available, the confusion was justified as to how to settle on which could be the best one. Iyer painted a bigger picture that lies in the situation. Comparing the diversity in the mangoes to the diversity in India, he talks about how different people with different strengths and capabilities come together, and all of them, together, are celebrated. The verdict: This mango season, let's enjoy the variety as we celebrate the diversity among us aam aadmi!

James Godber and Shalini Medepalli

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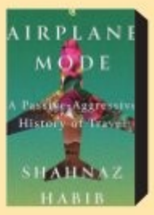
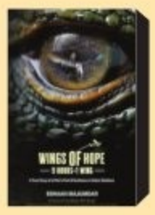


Airplane Mode
by Shahnaz Habib

A witty take on understanding the post-colonial world, along with focusing on the disasters of capitalism and climate change. It takes the readers through the journey of a third-world woman of colour, exploring many questions like who gets to travel and who gets to write about the experience.

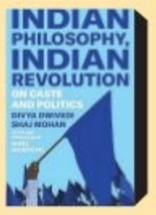


Wings of Hope
by Eshaan Majumdar

The book takes us through the author's retelling of surviving a horrific plane crash in Everglade's shadowy waters. As the nightmare unfolds, the only thing he can cling to is his resilience, hope, and desire to live.

Biopeculiar
by Gigi Ganguly

Stepping into the realm of imagination, Gigi Ganguly travels through an unfamiliar world as she deals with the intricacies of human relationships, the questions that one discovers over their lives, and the mysteries of the natural world.



Indian Philosophy, Indian Revolution On Caste And Politics
by Divya Dwivedi and Shaj Mohan

Focusing on political science and the continental philosophical tradition, this anthology of anti-caste essays helps the readers understand the ascending oppression of democracy in India while engaging with the resurgence of upper-caste supremacism in India.

LITTLE RESPITE

A girl uses her umbrella to brace herself from the scroching summer heat englufing the city streets | **VINOD KUMAR T**

QUICKFIX

MANGO BLOSSOM

INGREDIENTS

- **Mango:** 1
- **Rooh Afza:** 1 tsp
- **Soda:** 1 glass
- **Mint leaves:** 2 to 3
- **Ice cube:** 1 cup

METHOD

- To a glass, add chopped mangoes and mint leaves and mash them.
- Then add Rooh Afza and ice to the glass and mix them.
- Then add the soda and mix it well, and it's ready to serve.

Contributed by **Stella Susana**, Hyderabad

MISS-FIT

Wanitha Ashok

The expert is a Fit India Movement Ambassador and celebrity fitness coach

I have type-2 diabetes. Is it ok for me to go in for high-intensity training?

Diabetes should not stop you from leading the life you want. This is my two cents on it: people with any kind of diabetes are at a higher than average risk of heart disease, and they should always check with their doctors before starting a demanding exercise programme. For people who have been sedentary, or have other medical problems, lower-intensity exercises are recommended, using programmes that are designed for patients by their doctors. Strenuous strength training or high-impact exercise is not recommended for people with uncontrolled diabetes. Such exercises can strain weakened blood vessels in the eyes of patients with retinopathy (a common diabetic complication). High-impact exercises may also injure blood vessels in the feet. Patients who are taking medications that lower blood glucose, particularly insulin, should take special precautions before starting a workout programme. Wear good, protective footwear to help avoid injuries and wounds on the feet. Glucose levels swing dramatically during exercise. People with diabetes should monitor their levels carefully before, during, and after workouts. Patients should also avoid exercise if glucose levels are above 300 mg/dL or under 100mg/dL. To avoid hypoglycemia (low blood sugar), people with diabetes should inject insulin in sites away from the muscles they use the most during exercise.

ASK AN XPERT

FITBIT

TADASANA WITH BLOCK BETWEEN THIGHS

This is also called Mountain Pose With Block Between Thighs. It is a standing, beginner-level Vinyasa flow that uses a block placed between the thighs to create subtle awareness of the lower body. It encourages beginners to bring awareness to their hips, hip flexors, and pelvis. The block helps to engage the muscles around the hips and pelvis, thereby bringing stability and strength.

STEPS

- Keep a yoga block ready, and start in Tadasana. Take a couple of breaths here.
- Firmly place your feet on the ground with a little distance between them. Keep your arms on your sides. Feel the strength in the calf, ankle, and hamstrings.
- Place the block between the inner thigh muscles and squeeze it. Stay here for 2-3 breaths.
- Ensure that the tailbone is pushed in, with the pelvis kept in a posterior tilt.
- Roll back your shoulders, open your chest, and straighten your spine.
- Inhale, tuck in the core muscles and raise your heel. Exhale, and balance.
- Hold in Mountain Pose On Tiptoes for about 3-4 breaths. Feel the change in breathing pattern as the inhalation and exhalation get deeper.
- Exhale, release and come back to Tadasana.
- Inhale, bring your arms backwards, and stretch them. Exhale and squeeze the block.
- Exhale completely. Bending your knees and engaging your thighs and buttocks to hold the block, look straight with your arms still behind you.
- Inhale, release and get back to Tadasana. Stay here for 3-4 breaths.
- Inhale and stretch your spine; exhale and bend forward. Loosen the hips, with the knees slightly bent, and bring the arms in front in Dangling Pose, lowering your head. Exhale completely and stay for about 3–4 breaths.
- Make sure that the feet are kept grounded and parallel to each other. Ensure that the inner thighs are active in muscle contraction while holding the block.
- Inhale, lift your head and arms up, lengthen your spine, and come back to Tadasana. Exhale, and lower your hands.
- Connect back to your breathing and bring awareness to the yoga block, muscles involved, and sensations felt. Repeat it.
- Release and relax in Tadasana.

BENEFITS

- Stretches the glutes, hamstrings, and muscles of the back.
- Strengthens the muscles of the hips, pelvis, core, hip flexors, hip adductors, and back.
- Stabilises the hips and pelvis.
- Opens the chest with the shoulders rolled back.
- Aids in releasing stress and tension.
- Releases the tightness at the hips, relaxing the body.
- Brings balance in the body and ensures better blood flow.
- Improves the lymphatic drainage in the body.
- Included in therapy yoga.
- Addresses mild sciatica.
- Aids in recovering from sports injuries related to hips, knees, or any ligaments, etc.

LIMITATIONS

- This flow may not be safe for those with an injury to the hips, pelvis, knees, or shoulders.
- Students with spine-related issues should be cautious while practising.
- If students lack the physical strength to push or hold the block, especially kids with chronic illness, genetic disorders, or those with weak bones, avoid this.

By N Elumalai, PhD Scholar (Yoga Science) at Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education & Research, Chennai

EXPRESS CONNECT

HAVE A RECIPE OR ART WORK TO SHARE, OR A QUESTION TO ASK?

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WHATWHENWHYWHERE

Laughter Fest

Prepare for a night of unabashed laughter with HOT takes comedy night with seasoned comics like **Rahul Robin** and Anand Rathnam delivering their unrestricted humour. Ready your laughs for a night that promises bold comedy and great fun!

When: Wire Up, Koramangala
Where: May 3, 8.30am
Details: bookmyshow.com

Handicrafts Haven

Explore the Sunday Soul Sante with over 200 vibrant stalls, showcasing handcrafted treasures from every corner of the country along with a diverse range of food and a performance by the band Stringfisher.

When: May 12, 10am onwards **Where:** Jayamahal Palace Hotel, Nandi Durga Road Ext **Details:** bookmyshow.com

Ode to the ocean

Discover the world of resin art and create your own serene seascapes with this resin beach workshop.

When: May 2, 5pm
Where: Art Beat, HSR Layout
Details: bookmyshow.com

Boardgaming Saturdays

Say goodbye to dull weekends and join in for a lively board game session this weekend. Rekindle your love for board games with classics like Splendor and King of Tokyo and meet new people.

When: Dialogues Cafe, JP Nagar
Where: May 4, 5pm
Details: bookmyshow.com

Techno Beats

Experience an electrifying Saturday night with musician Pavel Petrov live! Revel in a concert-level experience with soulful techno and house music and join this rising star, as he showcases his talent behind the decks.

When: May 4, 9pm
Where: Sunburn Union, Koramangala
Details: bookmyshow.com

Sweet Adventures

Dive into Candy Land, a dream-come-true summer setup for kids with fun workshops and exciting activities across eight stations. From candy making to cookie decoration, it's a month of creative and delicious art & craft workshops for children.

When: Till May 27, 12pm
Where: Shantiniketan Mall, Krishnarajapura
Details: bookmyshow.com

Flute Virtuoso

Get ready to revel in the artistry of **Hubert Laws**, renowned jazz flautist with a career spanning over five decades. Discover his musical versatility from classical to jazz with spellbinding tunes.

When: May 3-4, 9.30pm
Where: Windmills, Whitefield
Details: bookmyshow.com

Culinary Delights

Experience a new summer menu, including diverse and creative dishes with fresh, locally-sourced ingredients. Indulge in a mix of classic European flavours and innovative cocktails along with dishes like avocado tostada, mezze platter, and shrimp cocktail tarts.

When: Monday to Saturday 12pm & 7pm, Sunday: 12pm
Where: Lupa, MG Road **CALL:** 87923 84999

ARTCORNER

QUIET CONTEMPLATION

Artist Varun N Rao's still-life acrylic painting depicts the quiet and cosy table of a book lover, basking in the warmth of a candle

With World Malaria Day just having gone by, beware of the spread of malaria as mosquitoes are aplenty

BEWARE OF THAT BITE

DR SWATI RAJAGOPAL

IN India, malaria still poses a serious threat to public health despite considerable improvements in recent years. To save yourself and your loved ones against this preventable disease, it is essential to comprehend the risk factors and put preventive measures in place.

Recognising the spread of malaria

Plasmodium parasites are the cause of malaria, an infectious disease spread by mosquitoes. Via contaminated blood feeds, the Anopheles mosquito spreads the parasite to people. Because these mosquitoes breed in stagnant water bodies, malaria transmission is more common in locations with poor drainage especially during the monsoon season (June to September).

In India, who is most vulnerable to malaria?

- Travellers: People travelling to or relocating to locations where malaria is endemic, especially those that are mountainous, forested, or tribal belts, are at high risk.
- Individuals who live close to bodies of stagnant water: In peri-urban and rural regions, mosquitoes that thrive in puddles, ponds, or badly-maintained drainage systems constitute a serious menace.
- People with impaired immune systems: Those with HIV/AIDS, chronic illnesses, pregnant women, and children under five are particularly vulnerable to severe malaria.
- Communities without adequate preventative measures and sanitation.

Effective Ways to Stop Malaria

- Bed nets treated with long-lasting insecticides, or LLINs: The most effective way to prevent malaria is to sleep under insecticide-treated LLINs. Make sure you have full coverage. Given that they are more susceptible to the illness, pregnant women and small children should especially use LLINs.
- Repellents for insects: Carefully follow the directions on the package when applying repellents containing DEET (Diethyltoluamide), picaridin, or IR3535 to exposed skin and clothes. Especially during outdoor activities in the evenings and early mornings when mosquitoes are most active, repellents offer an extra layer of protection.
- Minimise sites for mosquito breeding: Avoid water stagnation from the areas surrounding your house, making sure drainage systems are in working order, and controlling vegetation close to homes. By supporting neighbourhood-level programmes for trash management and drainage enhancement, mosquito breeding grounds can be greatly reduced.
- Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS): Insecticides are frequently sprayed outdoors, and repellents are used indoors as part of public health campaigns to kill mosquitoes. When such programmes are offered in your region, participate in them. IRS campaigns are an effective strategy for managing mosquito populations, and their success depends on community involvement.
- Early diagnosis and treatment: Seek emergency medical assistance if you have any of the following symptoms, especially after visiting a high-risk area: fever, chills, sweating, headache, muscle pains, or exhaustion. Complications and transmission can be avoided with early diagnosis and timely medical care. Effective therapy of malaria and stopping the disease's spread depend on early symptom recognition and medical consultation.

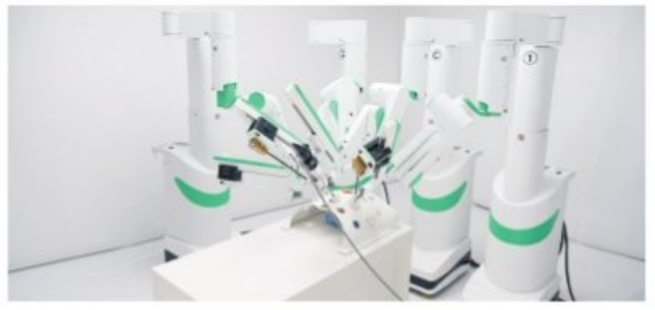
(The writer is consultant – infectious disease & travel medicine, Aster CMI Hospital)

NUGGETS

HEALTH STARTUP PRIORITISING DIABETIC FOOT AND SPORTS INJURIES

Footsecure, a healthcare startup focused on podiatric medicine, is transforming foot care in India by addressing chronic wounds and foot disorders, including diabetic foot complications and sports injuries. Led by co-Founder Dr Sanjay Sharma, the company has reduced amputation rates among diabetic patients and improved recovery times for sports-related injuries through innovative care and advanced clinics in the city. Since its inception, Footsecure has treated over 300 cases and aims to become the leading lower limb and wound care provider by 2025. The startup's digital platforms, Wound360 and Foot360, enhance diagnosis and treatment, supporting their mission to integrate podiatric medicine within India's healthcare system.

INDIA'S FIRST SURGICAL ROBOT FINISHES 1,000 SURGERIES



SS Innovations, the developer of India's first surgical robotic system – SSi Mantra – has achieved a milestone by completing 1,000 surgeries using the surgical robot. Launched commercially at Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute in July 2022, the system, known for its cost-effectiveness and broad surgical applications, has quickly expanded to over 30 hospitals in the country, including international sites like Johns Hopkins University in USA. Founder Dr Sudhir Srivastava says, "With over 30 installations and 1,000 successful surgeries, we have just touched the tip of the iceberg. Although this milestone is very significant, more importantly, it reminds us of how much more we have to accomplish in India and around the world." SSi Mantra is poised for further expansion with pending regulatory approvals in the United States and Europe.

WEAK IN THE KNEES?

This Arthritis Awareness Month, here's how you can get back on your feet in no time after a knee replacement

DR SAI KRISHNA B NAIDU

ARTHRITIS is one of the most debilitating conditions in terms loss of quality of life. Most patients suffer pain along with disturbed sleep and other health-related issues. With 21st century medical advancements, a patient suffering with knee pain and not being treated right is a crime. There are various modalities to treat such as medications, knee braces/orthotics, physiotherapy and finally, surgery.

When we talk about surgery, we talk about overall alignment and best mobility for the patient. The knee surgery can be of various types such as:

1. High tibial osteotomy.
2. Uni compartmental/half knee replacement
3. Total knee replacement

Knee replacement surgeries are considered the most successful and they come in top three surgeries in terms of success rates rightly done. With the current practices that we follow, most patients walk within six hours of the surgery.

On the second day, they walk outside the room and by the third, they do independent chores with minimal support. This is achieved mainly because of good preoperative patient education and the following of enhanced rehabilitation protocol during and after surgery. This is achieved with good support from multidisciplinary team work such as anaesthetic team, physiotherapy team and the medical team.

The current implants and the surgical techniques that are used enhance the patient outcomes and most of them are able to achieve sitting cross-legged by end of six weeks. These patients also can do most sporting activities such as tennis, badminton and running. Normally, they are advised against any contact sports such as football.

How can I enhance my recovery after knee surgery?

Faster recovery can be achieved by good muscle strengthening and increasing the muscle mass prior to the surgery. This helps patient to be back on their feet much faster and with less pain.

Does robotic knee replacement have a faster recovery compared to the conventional knee surgery?

According to the current evidences from the American Orthopaedic Association, European and national registry from UK, there is no clear evidence suggesting that the robotic surgery has a faster recovery. Hence, based on this evidence, the insurance companies do not approve robotic surgeries and the cost is borne by the patient themselves. The incision done for the conventional knee surgeries are much smaller compared to the robotic ones and hence the recovery is much faster .

Why do we need to spend on robotic knee surgery if the conventional one is safe?

A robotic knee surgery minimises errors in comparison to conventional for people who are newly trained in terms of knee surgeries or in cases of grossly deformed knees. The analogy for this is – why do we need navigation to drive? Because navigation helps safer driving for a new driver and minimises errors, the same way the new surgeon finds it safer.

Is there a difference between robotic and conventional knee replacement surgeries for walking faster?

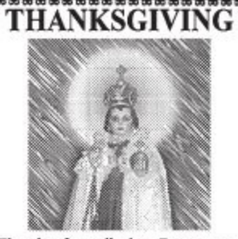
The answer is no! Both robotic and conventional knee replacements have same preoperative recovery time. However, a few studies show minimal dissection and smaller incision during surgery make post recovery faster.

(The writer is additional director bone & joint surgery Fortis Hospital, Richmond Road)

OTHERS

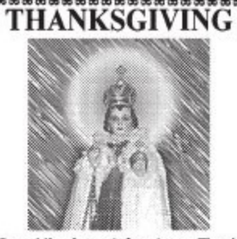
THANKSGIVING

THANKSGIVING



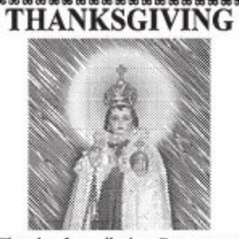
Thanks for all the Favours & Blessings received, Bless our Family always. **RICHARD FLORENCE AND FAMILY.**

THANKSGIVING



Dear Miracleous Infant Jesus, Thank you for the favors received and continue to bless us with the favors we seek.
SRINIVAS & FAMILY

THANKSGIVING



Thanks for all the Favours & Blessings received, Bless our Family always. **RICHARD FLORENCE AND FAMILY.**

THANKSGIVING
THE MIRACLE PRAYER

Dear Heart of Jesus. in the past. I have asked for many favors. This time. I ask you this very special favor (mention favor). Take it dear Heart of Jesus, and place it within your own broken heart where your Father sees it. Then in his merciful eyes it will become your favor. not mine.
Amen. Say this prayer for 3 days, promise publication and favor will be granted. no matter how impossible. Never known to fail.
Thank you for the favors, graces and blessings received, seeking continous blessings on my family always
Joseph George

THANKSGIVING

Thank you INFANT JESUS for all mercies, blessings, and graces received to me and my family Let there be peace of mind and good health always in my family.
TREESA JOSEPH AND FAMILY

SMART ADS

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PUBLIC NOTICE

CHANGE OF NAME

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Mydhili Padmanabhan,** D/o Padmanabhan Kalyansundaram, R/o B202, Mahindra Windchimes, Arekere, Bannerghatta Road, Opposite BPL Software, Bangalore South, PO: Bannerghatta, Road, Dist: Bengaluru, Karnataka, 560076, have changed my name to **Miraa Suku Padmanabhan** for all future purposes.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Service No: 15319171M, Rank : HAV, Name A.Kumar, Residing at No.92/ 2C, Mohamed Nagar, Ruthirasolai(Vill), Mannarkulakudi (Post), Cuddalore (Dist), Tamil Nadu(State) Pin : 608301, have changed my Daughter's name from Yashnavi to Yashnavi.K vide affidavit dated 15.04.2024 Sworn before Notary S.I.Balaguru, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **ISHA AGARWAL,** W/o umang Sultania, Aged about 28 years, R/at No. 304, 3rd Floor, Salarpuria paradise, Aga Abbas Ali Road, off: Ulsoor Road, Bengaluru-560042, have changed my name **ISHA AGARWAL to ISHA SULTANIA,** vide affidavit dated 16.03.2024 before Notary **'MEERA. H'**

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Mrs. MALINI SIVANESAN** W/o Mr. Sivanesan Sivapragasam R/at No.166, Lakshmi Nivas, AECS Layout, 1st Main, Sanjaynagar, Bangalore-560094, hereby declare that I have changed my name from **MALINI SIVAPRAGASAM SIVANESAN** to **MALINI SIVANESAN** Henceforth my name will be **MALINI SIVANESAN** only in all my records and correspondence. Vide affidavit dated 30.04.2024 sworn before Notary **K V Nanjaiah**, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **(OLD NAME) ROOPA DEVI,** Spouse of NO. JC- 310101A SUB MAJ SAVADALA RAJA RAO, Residing at House NO.48-4-45/1, Kamala Vari Street, Golilapeta (Vill), Jagannadhapuram (Post), Kakinad Urban (Tehsil), Kakinada (Dist), ANDHRA PRADESH (State), PIN:533002, Have Changed My Name to **(NEW NAME) SAVADALA ROOPA DEVI,** Vide Affidavit Dated 29.04.2024 Sworn Before Notary S.I. BALAGURU BANGALORE.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **(OLD NAME) CHINNAPATHI,** Mother of NO.15329448N HAV SILAMBARASAN V, Residing at House NO.17/22, Muthiyalaman Kovil Street, Krishnagiri (Vill, TK & Post), Krishnagiri (Dist), TAMIL NADU (State), PIN: 635002, Have Changed My Name to **(NEW NAME) CHINNATHAI VANRAJ,** And **DOB** from **01.07.1963** to **01.07.1955** Vide Affidavit Dated 29.04.2024 Sworn Before Notary S.I. BALAGURU BANGALORE

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **(OLD NAME) P.Y ABHISHEK,** Son of NO.JC- 311469P SUB MAJ PURUSHOTTAMA RAMARAJU, Residing at House NO. 3-7-403/64,65, F-101, Ist FLR, Uma Bhavan, Prakash Nagar Colony, K.V. Rangareddy (Dist), TELANGANA (State), PIN: 500048, Have Changed My Name to **(NEW NAME) PURUSHOTTAM Y ABHISHEK,** Vide Affidavit Dated 30.04.2024 Sworn Before Notary MEER HASSAN BANGALORE.

CHANGE OF NAME

I,**SANTHOSH.P** R/a Majalodi Bannadka, EEDU Post, Karkala Taluku, EEDU, Udupi Karnataka-574107. I Have Changed My Name From **SANTHOSH** to **SANTHOSH.P** Vide Affidavit Date:01.05.2024. Sworn Before Notary: Santhosh.P

CHANGE OF NAME

I,**CHETHAN A.P,** S/o Puttaswamy.C, aged about 36 years, R/at No.7, A.G. Rangaswamappa Road, 1st Cross, 100 ft. Road, Sri Ranga Nagar, VTC : Bangalore South, Banashankari III Stage, Bangalore - 560085, have changed my name from **CHETAN A.P** (old name) to **CHETHAN A.P** (new name) for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 29-04-2024 sworn before Notary Ravikumar V., Bengaluru.

AFFIDAVIT

I, **VIKYATH GOWDA** S/o Suresh.R.J. R/at No.122, 6th Cross, Basappa Layout, Pattanagere, Rajarjeshwarinagar, Bangalore, Karnataka - 560098, hereby declare that as per my school records, Aadhar, Pan, Voter ID and Driving Licence My correct name is **VIKYATH GOWDA** but in my Passport my name is mentioned as **RUDRAPATNA SURESH VIKYATH GOWDA.** Request to remove prefixes and change my name to **VIKYATH GOWDA** in my passport. Vide affidavit dated 30.04.2024 sworn before the Notary Public **R. Sulakshana**, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Shivaprasad Giliyar Srinivasa,** (Old Name), S/o. Srinivasa Adiga, aged about 38 years, R/at No. 4-92, Sumuka Nilaya, Tekkatte, Kundapura, Udupi - 576 231, I have changed my name as **SHIVAPRASAD GILIYAR** (New Name) vide affidavit dated 30.04.2024 sworn before Advocate & Notary Devika Kumari A. Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **(OLD NAME) CHOWTAKURI MURALI,** Father of NO. 16125567Y NK CHOWTAKURI MOHAN, Residing at House NO. 2-78, Katepalle (Vill & Post), Pitlam (Tehsil), Nizamabad (Dist), TELANGANA (State), PIN: 503310, Have Changed My Name to **(NEW NAME) CHOUTAKURI MURALAI YADHAV,** And **DOB** from **01.01.1968** to **10.01.1963** Vide Affidavit Dated 08.04.2024 Sworn Before Notary C.V. EARAPPA BANGALORE.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **(OLD NAME) KOREPU MANJULA,** Mother of NO.16131321W L/NK KOREPU PRASHANTH, Residing at House NO.5-100/1, Vattemla (Vill), Vemulawada (MD), Rajanna Sircilla (Dist), TELANGANA (State), PIN: 505302, Have Changed My Name to **(NEW NAME) KOREPU MALLAMMA,** Vide Affidavit Dated 30.04.2024 Sworn Before Notary MEER HASSAN BANGALORE

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **(OLD NAME) C. PRABHAKARAN,** Father of NO. 16126966P NK ABIJITH.P, Residing at Valayil House, Mannapra (Post), Palakkad (Dist), KERALA (State), PIN: 678685, Have Changed My Name to **(NEW NAME) PRABHAKARAN.C,** And **DOB** from **24.09.1958** to **01.01.1955** Vide Affidavit Dated 30.04.2024 Sworn Before Notary MEER HASSAN BANGALORE

AFFIDAVIT

I, **Adit Jain,** aged about 19 years, S/o Dilip Kumar, R/at No.13, 3rd cross, 3rd Main, Ganganagar, R.T.Nagar Post, Bengaluru North, Bengaluru-560032, do hereby my correct Name is **Adit Jain** But Wrongly mentioned in my Indian Passport (No.L8794206) as **Dilip Adit Jain,** these Name **Adit Jain** and **Dilip Adit Jain** one and the same person. Sworn before Notary **Sivakumara.M.N.** on 29.04.2024, at Bengaluru.

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'IT IS UP TO THE AUDIENCE TO KEEP KANNADA FILMS ALIVE IN THEATRES'

...says Aditya as he discusses his next film *Kangaroo*, which he reveals is not just your typical thriller, opposite Ranjani Raghavan as the female lead

Aditya

Ranjani Raghavan

A SHARADHAA

ADITYA'S upcoming film *Kangaroo* is hitting screens on May 3. However, before discussing the film, Aditya earnestly calls upon audiences to champion Kannada cinema's survival. "I hope we don't come to a stage where we shut down Kannada cinema," he expresses with concern. "It's up to the audience to keep it alive by watching Kannada films in theaters, which will encourage more productions."

Aditya points out the formidable competition posed by digital entertainment, labelling it theatrical cinema's biggest rival. "Entertainment at the audience's disposal and convenience is only growing," he remarks while adding, "Regulations might be the key to changing this trend." He stresses the importance of preserving the theatre experience, noting that despite OTT releases shortly after theatrical runs, nothing compares to the immersive thrill of watching a film on the big screen.

Reflecting on his past successes at Triveni Talkies with films like *Deadly Soma* and *Edegarike*, Aditya hopes that *Kangaroo* continues the trend. The actor, who is never tired of playing a cop, offers a refreshing twist as he steps into the shoes of a family man for the first time with *Kangaroo*. "Being a cop feels right; it's better than being a gangster," he quips. "Audiences have shown a preference for such roles, and I'm happy to oblige. If they want to see me in uniform, so be it. If they want to view me as a gangster, I am ready to be in that shade too."

Exploring themes of care and the intricate bond between a mother and child, *Kangaroo* offers more than just a thrilling ride. "Despite its thriller facade, the film's undercurrent is deeply sentimental," Aditya reveals. "The last 25 minutes are a rollercoaster of emotions that nobody will expect; this is the film's USP," he says while adding, "It has a gripping storyline skillfully handled by the director."

Pawan Kumar's *U-Turn* inspired me in making Kangaroo

Kangaroo marks the directorial debut of Kishore Megalamane, introducing a suspense thriller with a family-friendly twist. "I call it a first thriller cinema with emotions, which bring the traits of the animal kangaroo into human behaviour," shares Kishore, whose film's narrative is inspired by Pawan Kumar's *U-Turn*. Reflecting on his journey from producing to directing, he mentions, "My first stint as a producer was with *Operation Nakshatra*, where I wrote the screenplay and dialogue. Inspired by *U-Turn's* essence, I've woven a similar thread into *Kangaroo*." The film, made under the banner Arohi Productions, brings together six friends as producers, including Aditya and Ranjani Raghavan. Kishore commends Aditya's realistic portrayal of a cop, reminding us of his role in *Edegarike* and highlighting its departure from formulaic cinema. "With Ranjani Raghavan portraying the role of a psychiatrist, the film is a blend of suspense, emotion, and realistic portrayals," says Kishore as he signs off.

Kishore Megalamane

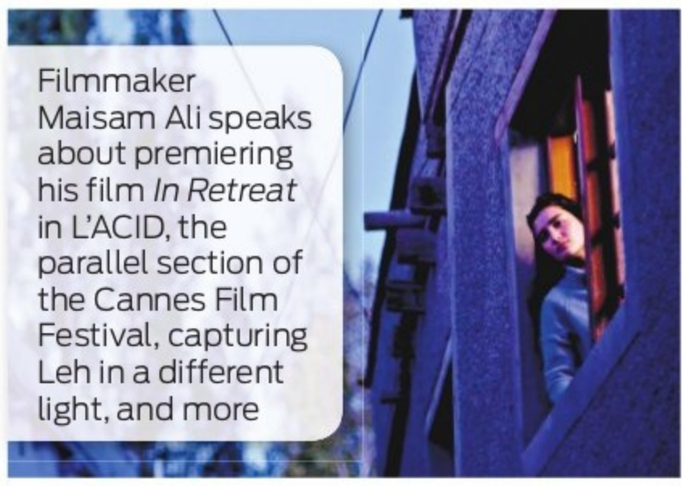
A still from the film

Manoj K Jayan returns to Kannada cinema with *Rangasthala*

CE FEATURES

IESHWARA Nithin, a dental student turned director, is embarking on his maiden directorial venture with *Rangasathala*. A student of the LV Prasad Film Institute, Ishwara Nithin has opted for a narrative rooted in rural coastal landscapes for his debut directorial. With forty percent of the shooting completed, the makers recently unveiled the title of the film. *Rangasathala*, produced by Revanna under the Aghor Motion Picture banner, is set against the backdrop of a Mangaluru village. According to the director, the film aims to capture the intricacies of life in the village—its dialects, culture, customs, thoughts, art, and essence. Nithin describes the stage as a platform where various forms of performing arts are showcased. Similarly, in his story, each actor explores a distinct mindset, bringing together the experiences and challenges within *Rangasthala*. Vilok Raj, a seasoned actor with nine films known for his role in Girki, plays the lead role of a skilled folk singer in *Rangasthala*. On the other hand, Shilpa Kamath portrays the role of a wildlife photographer. Malayalam actor Manoj K Jayan, who has previously worked across multiple languages, including the Kannada film *Ugra Narasimha*, returns to Kannada cinema after eighteen years with a negative character in *Rangasthala*. A self-professed fan of the legendary Dr Rajkumar, Manoj fondly reminisces about the icon's work and musical prowess. *Rangasathala's* musical score is by Judah Sandy and cinematography is by Enosh Olivera.

'I wanted to bring out the texture of Leh'



Filmmaker Maisam Ali speaks about premiering his film *In Retreat* in L'ACID, the parallel section of the Cannes Film Festival, capturing Leh in a different light, and more

NAMRATA JOSHI

Director Maisam Ali's *In Retreat* is set to have its world premiere in L'ACID (Association for the Diffusion of Independent Cinema), the parallel, independent sidebar in Cannes. It will be the first Indian film to play there. Part of HAF (Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum) Work-in-Progress lab in 2022, the unconventional film is set in Ladakh and plays with the ideas of time and space, geographical expanse, and the sense of belonging and disconnect. The themes are explored through a middle-aged man who returns to his hometown after a long absence but gets late for his brother's funeral.

A product of the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune, Ali is the batchmate of Payal Kapadia whose debut feature All We Imagine As Light plays in the Competition section of the Cannes Film Festival this year. He spoke to CE about all that went into the making of In Retreat.

Excerpts:

Debut films are supposed to emerge from a personal space. Does it hold true for *In Retreat*?

The idea came to me in the film school. My forefathers, originally from Kashmir, were traders. They lived in Ladakh but would also travel for trade to parts of Central Asia, and China. My father did MBBS in the 80s, went to Iran and practised there. I was born in Iran and then we moved back to Ladakh. I moved out of Ladakh because of studies, work etc. From all this came the ideas of home and the feeling of disconnect.

I also remember seeing somebody like the lead character when I was in fifth or sixth standard. Somebody who had come back. I heard a few things about him, how he was roaming around, just trying to make small talk, and I felt a kind of sadness for him. Sometimes small things create a big impact. The memory stayed with me. Maybe I felt this person was a distant version of myself. I feel disconnected and misplaced. I don't like to be defined in a cultural sense—he is from here, so he should be like this.

More than the story, the film is about ideas. Is it the kind of cinema that excites you?
I wouldn't go so far as to say cinema of ideas. I'm just trying to create a larger experience. Also, there is a sense of disconnect which I like. The disconnected scenes have their own identity, yet they are connected, while still disconnected. Then there is this girl who is doodling and a person roaming in the shadows, being there but not being there. What is the relationship between them? They are also connected in some sense, in time.

I also feel cinema must be rooted in realism. The word realistic might be a cliche but realism is an interesting element for me, I hold onto it to make films.

How did you approach Leh in terms of capturing it on camera?
Ladakh is a tourist place, and its images are of a certain nature. It was very important for me to not to have that. I wanted to bring out the texture of the place. I chose small pockets in the town, where I had some sense of history and memory.

Apart from the lead actor Harish Khanna, are most of the cast picked up locally?
Casting was done, in a sense, to create a realistic feel. So, there are a lot of non-actors and local actors. The kid is my nephew, my cousin's son. Then there are my other relatives also. In that sense, it became more personal.

Coming to the writing, it is often metaphorical, and poetic.
There's one of Mahmoud Darwish's poems—If I were another on the road. I felt it was very apt there. Other than that, there is my own writing. But it is not about making it very conclusive. Just poetic fragments here and there, like the film, like the images. It's about suggesting something.

Shwetha returns to acting in Kannada after a hiatus, welcomes small screen

CE FEATURES

ACTOR Shwetha, also known as Vinodhini in Tamil and Malayalam cinema, and a popular face in Kannada, is making a return to acting through a television soap opera titled *Lakshmi Nivasa*. With a career spanning around 75 films in various languages, her last Kannada appearance was in 2003's *Kutumba*. She returns to acting after a hiatus of over 20 years; only, this time, she is stepping back into the limelight through the small screen, marking a fresh chapter in her career.

Currently, Shwetha is juggling between Chennai and Bengaluru as part of her work. Reflecting on her decision to return to acting, she shares, "I took a long break to focus on my family, but acting has always lingered in the back of my mind. When I was approached for the Kannada serial, I realised the potential of the small screen and its vast reach. That's why I decided to embrace this opportunity."

Despite the transition to television, Shwetha is delighted that her presence is still connected with Kannadigas. "People still associate me with my roles like *Karpoorada Gombe* and *Lakshmi Mahalakshmi*. It is overwhelming to receive recognition and appreciation, especially for my work alongside Vishnuvardhan," she expresses.

While Shwetha is currently thriving on the small screen, her heart remains set on returning to the silver screen. "I am actively on the lookout for compelling scripts that will allow her to reconnect with my audience in cinemas," she says.

Shwetha

Rishi takes on a detective role in mystery thriller

CE FEATURES

RISHI, the actor of *Operation Alamelamma*, who is currently juggling between the Telugu and Kannada industries, is gearing up for the release of *Ramana Avatara*. Meanwhile, the actor is equally creating a buzz with *Rudra Garuda Purana*. The film, directed by KS Nandeesh (*Dear Vikram*), will mark the first production venture of Ashwini Lohith under the banner of Ashwini Arts.

The initial glimpse of *Rudra Garuda Purana* was unveiled by Ashwini Puneeth Rajkumar, who extended her best wishes to the team. The first look unfurls multiple layers, hinting at a narrative rich in human complexities, while weaving mythological undertones into its imagery.

In the film, Rishi portrays Rudra, a detective delving into a mysterious crime. The poster depicts Rishi and Lady Justice, both blindfolded, against the backdrop of a blazing bus. Returning to his cop role after Hemanth M Rao's *Kavaludaari*, produced by PRK Productions, Rishi will yet again be seen in the khaki avatar. Priyanka Kumar, who made her debut with Suri's *Bad Manners*, will appear alongside Rishi in *Rudra Garuda Purana*. The film also features Vinod Alva, Avinash, Shivaraj K R Pete, Giri, KS Shridhar, Ashwini Gouda, Ram Pavan, Vamshi, Aakarsh, Joseph, Prabhakar, Gautam Mysuru, Sneek Shyam, and Ranganath Bharadwaj, along with comedy stars Jagappa, Prasanna Handrang, Radvi and others in supporting roles.

The shooting for the film has already concluded, and its post-production work is underway. *Rudra Garuda Purana* is slated for a July release.